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WATERS THAT PASS AWAY

BY

N. B. WINSTON

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."—Prov. xiv: 12.

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WATERS THAT PASS AWAY.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE northeastern and central portions of the State of New Jersey consist of a vast plain. Following the route of the Pennsylvania Railroad from Jersey City to Newark, the Palisades are left behind, and one comes upon a scene of little variety. Between these two towns the entire surface of the country is seemingly one broad sweep of meadows, stretching away in a serene, unbroken expanse beyond the range of the human eye, and finally losing themselves in the picturesque Jersey shore at the mouth of the Hudson river. Outside of their commercial and industrial activities Jersey City and Newark possess little interest, and the nine miles of monotonous meadow-land lying between the two places offer nothing to the observer unless he has a fondness for fresh, green nature, without other adornment or diversity.

Leaving Newark, and bearing, we will say, toward the northeast, a familiar country roadway

crosses these Jersey meadows, and at a mile's distance from the town climbs a gradual, gentle slope, bringing one at this point on to a plateau of no great prominence, yet commanding a good view of the meadows below and of the lands above, which not far away toward the west break into an abrupt elevation. This rise of ground being well wooded with oak, hickory, and other forest trees native to Jersey soil, forms an effective background for these green, quiet lowlands. Upon the plateau mentioned is situated an inconspicuous cottage with a surrounding flower-garden, and this garden, at the time of which we write, though small in dimensions and abundant only in familiar plants, was so artistic in design, was so well cultivated and cared for, that no one ever passed that way without observing it as a thing of genuine beauty in the landscape.

For three years past this simple cottage had been tenanted by Alexander Galbraith, an invalid artist, and his wife—the latter reported by her neighbors to be a young woman of exclusive and haughty manner, yet really admired, and possibly envied by them, for the quiet dignity of her life and the exceptional beauty of her person. Galbraith, as the neighbors had observed, never left the cottage, though he could often be seen in the afternoon, seated at the west window watching the sunset, if the day happened to be fine. Mrs. Galbraith, it had also been observed, spent a portion of each day, when the seasons permitted, in free out-of-door pursuits, in caring for the flowers which so surrounded and individualized the Galbraith cottage; some-

times, too, it was noticed she took rapid, lonely walks across the fields opposite the cottage, or through the meadows below; but only an urgent domestic errand took her away for any length of time, or carried her so far now as into the city. As for visits, she no longer paid any nor thought of doing so. The few friends whom the Galbraiths had in New York came to them, but the social world, in the true sense, had ceased to exist for the invalid artist and his beautiful wife, who, leading their life apart, amid sorrow and despair, really quite forgot at times how little affected are the arrangement and the movement of the world's great social system by any failure of the individual.

Some twenty-five years before the time of which we write, a small boy lay one summer afternoon in the long, lush grass, which grew exuberantly in an old garden, and lying there he became conscious for the first time of the sweetness and richness of nature. An overpowering sense of the vast suggestiveness of the world about him had seemed to awaken his soul; it was as if a revelation of things wonderful and mysterious had been made to him; the very odors arising from the warm, pulsing earth upon which he lay filled him with delicious sensations, new and startling to one of his years. While the boy thus for the first time felt the charm of nature enter into his being, his sense of beauty was still further aroused by a brilliant and glorious sunset, which made the sky and all the vision before him a scene of transcendent radiance. A magic touch, in an instant, had transformed the familiar and the commonplace, and wrought it into such a dream

outset of his career. Acting upon a plan he had arranged for himself years before, he returned, after his marriage, to America, and set up a studio in New York. He had paid for this act a price of which he had seldom spoken—to leave Paris and all Europe behind, with its vital, glowing art-world, was to leave behind the things most dear to him, the things which had given him his own development. His conviction, however, was unalterable, that only in his native land would he live, labor, and wield his influence. In obedience to this conviction he established himself in New York, hoping that American art might be somewhat advanced and individualized by his achievements.

At first, everything promised well. Later he sometimes thought that, perhaps, he had been too happy, too confident at that time, and that his great misfortune had been sent to prove to him that "man proposes, but God disposes." Certainly he had fulfilled the conditions considered essential to permanent success. His aim, he knew, had been high; his life he had striven to keep pure; and his dedication to art had been virtually holy. These things no one could dare gainsay. It is not surprising, then, that Alex Galbraith had never taken calamity into account, and that his prognostics of life had included no great misfortunes. In the light of such facts, if, after the blow came, he had remained ever a helpless, hopeless, dying man, who can find it in his heart to blame him? Certainly, a misfortune like his was exceptional and irreparable. Galbraith felt that no such fate as his had ever been meted out to man. What was a blind Milton, a

deaf Beethoven to him, *a painter without hands!* * The victim of a terrible railroad accident, Galbraith, in making an effort to escape, had fallen between two cars just as a sudden lurch brought them violently together. As if by miracle his body escaped being crushed, but his arms were so broken and torn, that, without any kind of consultation and while he remained unconscious from pain, they were both amputated just below the shoulder-joint. In this way Galbraith had lost those strong, well-shaped hands of his, hands that had been so carefully, skillfully trained to do an artist's finest, most dexterous work.

A fate like this speaks for itself; no comment can deepen the despair which such a fate has written against it. Entirely unfitted by temperament and training for any other career than that of a painter, Galbraith found his spirit, once so high and brave, broken and crushed beneath the daily struggle which remained to him. The studio in New York had, of course, to be given up, and for economic reasons, when Galbraith became equal to the removal, he and Helen went to live in the modest Jersey cottage just spoken of. This cottage, though small and unpretentious, was quite sufficient for the

* NOTE.—As a matter of fact, there have been several armless painters of modern times, some of them distinguished in their profession. These armless painters, however, acquired their art *originally* by learning to use their toes or their mouths in place of their hands, either having been born without hands, or having lost them before they took up painting. I can find no account of any skilled painter, who, having lost his arms, continued the practise of his art, after having trained some other member of his body to do the work which his hands had done.

purposes of the Galbraiths' lives; it gave them a good, large living-room, with broad windows looking to the south and west, a comfortable bedroom, and a kitchen and store-room well suited to their domestic needs. It was of course, nothing more than a retreat in which only simple, unaffected living was possible, but Galbraith's wife and artist friends had hoped that, amid its quietening influences, health might come back to him, and that he might yet be able to take up life again, possibly to accomplish something in a new line of work. It had been suggested, that he might in time lecture to classes on art, or that he might, by dictation to his wife, who was well fitted to assist at such a task, produce very acceptable and instructive articles on special subjects made familiar to him through his past studies. At first, Galbraith's friends held out great hope for some career, and his wife encouraged, served, and waited, bestowing now upon him every thought, every aspiration, every emotion of her being, with somehow the unquestioning belief that she might in this way revive Galbraith's own enthusiasm and restore confidence and energy to his despairing spirit. For three years the struggle had gone on—a daily death in life. Under the strain Galbraith's health had become more and more broken, his spirit less and less equal to what was expected of him. Long ago all thought of the lectures had been given up; his nerves were too shaken for any such effort.

Writing, however, was still clung to as a last hope; Helen felt that if this were resigned it would end all things for Alex Galbraith. Some days it seemed to go very well. The old fire, the old en-

thusiasm for art would flash out, and Galbraith, like an inspired prophet, would speak words worthy of a true artist,—words, which could they have been rightly related to some sustained line of thought, should have immediately fixed his position as a writer of power. Galbraith's genius, however, was too special for him to master an art for which he had no native inclination ; he could not easily train himself to express in words what his imagination fashioned. Often, when seeking to dictate to his wife, at the very moment when he seemed ready to weld his thought into a comprehensive whole, he would rush forward as if to grasp the pencil himself, and, rather than in words, to express his ideas in lines of symmetry and beauty ; then, comprehending his utter helplessness, he would fall back into his chair in absolute despair. At such times, the agony of their situation seemed to Helen Galbraith more than she could endure. It was the frequent occurrence of scenes like this, and the constant demands they made upon her vitality and sympathy, that had increased to an abnormal degree one quality of Helen's nature, giving her an appearance of resigned, dignified sadness, quite inconsistent with her years. Compassion, infinite compassion, it might be said, had always been one of the strongest qualities of her nature, and the distress of her present life had so increased and developed this quality in her heart, that at times now she felt herself to be *all pity*. In fact, like an anxious, grief-afflicted mother, she hovered near Galbraith when he gave way to the agony which was consuming him, enveloping his armless body in her

own tender embrace, and filling his ears with such words of devotion and comfort as might fall pleasantly and sweetly upon the senses even of a dying man. And the great thing about the devotion which Helen Galbraith rendered her husband was, that the note of self could not be detected in it at any time. From the day when she had first loved Galbraith, until the time of which we write, she had utterly given up all self-seeking. In the years before sorrow had laid its heavy hand upon their happiness, Helen's delight had been to gratify and indulge Galbraith's sense of beauty ; to this she had given all her thought and energy. But now, now all this was different, and she sought above everything else to encompass and protect him with all that is most tender and compassionate in the closest, most sacred personal relation. Eagerly and strenuously she strove to bear for him all the distress that had come upon him. Never for a moment did she relax her energies ; never did her heart grow cold or indifferent. To be there close at hand, to do for him at all times all that needed to be done, and to be to him all that it is ever possible for human being to be to another, this was the great purpose of her life. It was love doing its utmost, spending itself gladly and freely, and yet, with all its force and sacrifice, insufficient for the exigencies of the case.

The morning had been dark and stormy, but the clouds had passed away, leaving the afternoon clear and cool. In the Galbraith cottage the day had been unusually difficult and depressing, and the

afternoon sun was hailed with delight by Helen, who became filled with a desire to get out into the crisp October air, and test her walking powers. This desire on the part of Helen was but a natural reaction from the morning through which she had just passed. By dictating to his wife, Galbraith had made, this morning, a supreme effort to produce something in the shape of a readable article. Helen possessed a good deal of wisdom and taste about work of this kind, and, with the assistance of suggestions from her, what promised to be a fairly good review of "Some Recent French Painters" had been outlined. The excitement and nervous strain attending this piece of work had been greater than was usual, for it had become now a critical period in the fortunes of the Galbraiths, and everything depended upon their obtaining some kind of favor for their literary productions. Galbraith had invested all of his patrimony in the careful training he had given himself for his profession, believing that in the future he would be able to supply all of his and Helen's needs from the proceeds of the sales of his own paintings. After Alex's misfortune made all remunerative work impossible to him, the Galbraiths had become dependent for their maintenance upon Helen's inheritance, and this, at no time large, had been subject to such excessive demands both on account of Galbraith's illness and domestic needs, that scarcely anything of it remained. For a long time, Helen had been standing face to face with this possibility, and had striven to avoid it by making work of her own supply the money necessary for their daily living. As a writer she had

imagination, a good style, and no lack of humor. She had tried her hand repeatedly on original work, but what she had written had thus far met with no acceptance. It was with the aim of producing a salable article, if possible, that she and Alex had worked so anxiously during the morning just passed. The deep waters of need were about to close over them ; to protect themselves from such a calamity, they made use of the only powers at their command; yet neither of them felt very hopeful of the result. Like efforts had been made often before, and nothing practical had ever come of them. What Galbraith had to say of art, that was not fragmentary and incomprehensible, was entirely too opposed to the popular taste to find acceptance at the hands of the editors. Galbraith had returned to America filled with the purpose of opposing to the utmost of his ability that extreme impressionist school, which has so established itself of late years in the hearts of many young American artists. This school, Galbraith contended, was leading many of America's most talented young men into methods of work which produce only unnatural, unenduring effects. An impressionist himself, Galbraith knew well the danger of that tendency in landscape painting, which so utterly disregards all detail, that it succeeds only in producing masses of blurred color, devoid of all form, of all harmony. It was this influence, he claimed, that was covering the modern exhibition walls with those garish canvases, painted so persistently in violation of one of nature's most important laws. It is clear to everyone who will observe, as Galbraith often said, that there is

nothing in nature, from a stone to a mountain, from a footstool to a throne, that does not possess its proportion of light and shade. In a landscape, especially, there is not a patch of the size of a man's hand of the same shade or color—unless, it has been suggested, it be sky or water. And, yet, Galbraith saw everywhere an increasing disregard of these things on the part of the young landscape painters, who considered themselves the legitimate representatives of the impressionist school. Galbraith determined to oppose this popular fallacy, in the hope that by so doing he might influence the young men away from it, and lead them to see true relations in landscape painting. His idea in regard to this purpose had been, of course, to carry it out by means of his own practical influence, exhibiting his creed as a painter in his work from year to year. When this course was no longer possible, Galbraith naturally sought, through the art-articles which he attempted, to give expression to a belief which to him had become supremely important and vital. His nature was very earnest, he had good reasons always for the faith that was in him, and he did not know how to compromise in regard to his convictions, or as to a declaration of them. This explains how it was that he seemed often to strike too sure a note, not too sure for the principle involved, but too sure to appeal to those who held views dissimilar to his own. Galbraith certainly had no talent for those jocularities which are so often so dear to the editorial heart, and yet so meaningless to the intelligent reader, and, to be just to him, he had no wish to cultivate such a talent.

Galbraith and his wife were seated together in their living-room. Instead of yielding to her desire to go out for fresh air and exercise, Helen had given her attention to arranging Alex comfortably near the west window, so that he might watch, according to his custom, the play of the afternoon sun upon the broad Jersey meadows, which could be seen so finely from that point of view. Seeing that Galbraith had need this afternoon of companionship, Helen took her seat upon a stool at his feet, holding two books in her arms, with the intention of reading to him for a while, if it was his pleasure to have her so do.

Galbraith threw his head back against his cushioned chair in which he sat, half reclining. He looked out upon the calm, peaceful scene surrounding the cottage—then he looked down upon his wife.

"Read me some of those sonnets, sweetheart, if you like," he said, adding: "Poor Heine! what a fine fellow he was, with all his cynicism!"

Helen opened the book, which she held now in her hand, and read in a clear, sweet-toned voice some of the sonnets which Galbraith liked so much. That death-in-life kind of existence which Heine so long endured had come to have a certain fascination for Galbraith, and he liked at times to surrender himself to Heine's poetic contemplation of suffering. His own artistic nature found satisfaction in this; and the crown of thorns which *he* was called upon to wear seemed to press less heavily upon his brow, when he thought of how in poor Heine's case a similar crown of sorrow had been transformed into a lyric one of greatness and splendor.

When Helen had read several of Galbraith's favorite sonnets, she laid aside, at his request, the book from which she had read, and opening the one which lay in her lap, she read from it the pathetic account of that last visit which Heine had paid to the outside world. To do this was a sad duty for Helen, but Galbraith especially requested it, and so she read:

"It was in May that Heine took his last promenade in the Boulevards. Masses of the populace rolled along the streets of Paris, driven about by their tribunes as by storms. The poet, half blind, half lame, dragged himself on his stick and endeavored to extricate himself from the deafening uproar, and finally escaped into the Louvre close by . . . Ere long he found himself in the room on the ground floor in which the ancient gods and goddesses stand.

"Suddenly he stood before the ideal of Beauty, the smiling, entrancing goddess, the miracle of an unknown master, the Venus of Milo, who in the course of centuries has lost her arms but not her witchery. Overcome, agitated, stricken through, almost terrified at her aspect, the sick man staggered back till he sank on a seat, and tears, hot and bitter, streamed down his cheeks."

As Helen read, Galbraith's gaze had strayed from her own beautiful face, and rested upon the broad, silent meadows opposite his window. Nothing in all literature had ever so touched him as did this incident, which Helen had just read to him; nothing had ever been so personal and suggestive to him. For a time he could not speak. His gaze continued to rest upon the meadows below, but tears blinded

him. His heart was full. Poor Helen. She had ended her reading with a sob, the strain of the morning would have its revenge! Letting her head fall upon her husband's knee, she no longer tried to restrain her feelings. Outbursts of any kind were very rare with her, and Galbraith turned eagerly toward her as he felt her trembling body quiver against his own.

"Sweetheart, I am *very* selfish!" He spoke in a low, earnest tone, and bending over her, he pressed his lips to the brown hair, which fell richly and gracefully about Helen's head. It was at times like this, when she needed him, and when *his* heart bled for her, that he really felt most the loss of his arms.

"I should not have asked it of you, dear! But, somehow, after our trying morning, after the fight to get something accomplished, I feel more at ease than I usually do. Strange, but I seem now to catch something of the meaning of the words, 'I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.' Being in this mood, I wished once more to hear your dear voice read that pathetic scene, in which the great compassion of poor Heine seems to have reached its climax. You will forgive me, sweetheart?" For an answer she only lifted up her arms, and locked them about the stooping head of her husband. But this he knew, that he did not need forgiveness—that her sobs were only one form of expressing her love and sympathy for him. After this they sat together for an hour, exchanging very few words, yet satisfied with each other in their silence.

It was not surprising that an imaginative, sensitive woman, such as Helen Galbraith was, should

love Alex Galbraith very ardently and devotedly. The physique of the man had been enough of itself to insure a woman's admiration, for it is a law, not to be ignored, that manly beauty makes a strong appeal to woman's heart. Tall, splendidly developed in body and limb, Galbraith possessed that strong, clearly-cut classical type of face to which the softness of a dreamy dark eye gave a truly poetic expression. The most vivid and lasting impression which he had always given to those who knew him had been that of power—power as a man and as an idealist. He was recognized as one strong enough to carve out his own career, and his fellow-artists had felt that it would be a career marked out along purely original lines, yet with a distinct spiritual bias. With nothing of cant about him, Galbraith had seen from the very first, that his duty as a man and as an artist was to find out the best, and, having found that, to express it by his life and work. Such a man carries a simple, direct force with him into all the relations of life, that, combined, as in Galbraith's case, with a large sympathy and charm of person, cannot well be resisted. Those who believe in such a man, who recognize the integrity of his character, and the high purposes of his art, stamp themselves as being kindred spirits with his own.

Helen Galbraith fully understood her husband's mind and character, and had been always, since their intimate acquaintance, in the fullest sympathy with him. It was because she felt, as no other could, the extreme meaning of his misfortune, that that intensely compassionate note, spoken of, had been struck in her love for him. As she sat by his

side this afternoon, a still further realization of what it all meant came to her. Galbraith was beginning to waste away, to become more and more of a physical wreck; this came to Helen with a thrilling vividness now as she sat there in silence by the side of his solemn figure, so impressive in its mutilation. Their unaided efforts to circumvent fortune appeared to her as an absurdity; he and she, it seemed to her, were as two little children hopelessly lost, unless someone came to their rescue. This view of their situation had presented itself to her many times before, but never so vividly, so undeniably as now. Why go on, she asked herself, repeating days like the one through which they had just passed, when she saw and knew that they led to nothing but exhaustion and loss of strength? It must not be—it *could* not be—and life last long, her common-sense told her. Evidently then, the time had arrived for a different course to be adopted. Something practical must be done, and done quickly. For some time a plan had occurred to her, but a disagreeable one, and she had not allowed herself to consider it seriously. Now, however, it came into her mind again as the only feasible thing, and she felt impelled to face the situation. Nothing stood in the way of testing its practicability except the prejudice of Galbraith and herself against a certain man; and this prejudice made any move on her part difficult and unpleasant. What of that? she asked herself now. Was she not there to spend her strength and energy to the utmost to bring comfort to Alex? What, then, was one more self-surrender, one more humiliation? These thoughts

commenced now to take very definite shape in Helen's mind, and before she was conscious of what she was doing she had risen from her seat, and, moving about the room, fell to arranging the books and papers which during their morning's work had become strewn about in different places.

Helen was a tall woman; her slender figure was graceful and supple, and clad as she was this afternoon in a soft, plain dress of black, with a bit of white lace about her throat, she conveyed to an observer the impression of supreme dignity and womanly sweetness. Galbraith turned from the window and watched her with keenest interest, noting, as was his habit, the delightfully artistic proportions of her well-shaped form. Having gathered up the scattered books and papers, and restored the room to order, she paused before her tea-table, and taking up one of the pretty cups belonging there, she commenced to dust and rub it with her handkerchief. As she did this, it was evident that she was thinking closely about something outside of that room, and Galbraith, watching her, wondered what it might be. When two or three of Helen's dainty tea-cups had received a polishing, she stood for a moment or more gazing fixedly at a copy of Bouguereau's "La Vierge Consolatrice," which hung on the wall just above her tea-table. One of Galbraith's student friends in Paris was wont to say that Helen Whitridge, that having been Mrs. Galbraith's maiden name, resembled this "Vierge Consolatrice" of Bouguereau's—that she possessed the same dignity of person, had somewhat the same face, and promised to exhibit, in years of maturity,

the same sympathy and compassion. The years of maturity referred to by Galbraith's student friend had certainly not yet been reached, for Mrs. Galbraith had just passed her twenty-sixth birthday, but the resemblance between her, yet in her young womanhood, and Bouguereau's all-compassionate Madonna was very striking. Helen had even noticed this resemblance herself. She noticed it now, as she paused to look at the picture hanging above her tea-table. What strength and serenity there was in that woman, whom she was said to resemble! Turning toward Alex, she saw that he was observing her.

"I think I will go out, dear," she said. "Can you manage a few hours without me?"

"Why, yes, little girl," replied Galbraith, "but are you not very late in starting?"

"Well, yes, I am," said Helen, drawing near to the window, and looking out to see where the sun was in the heavens. "I want some exercise, though, and then,—" she hesitated before she added, "I have in this last half hour just taken a resolve. I am going to see Mr. Westmore about that newspaper work of which I have sometimes spoken."

She twirled her wedding ring nervously about her finger as she spoke, then walking rapidly over to the fire she threw a fresh log on it, before Galbraith could reply. He looked at her very earnestly as she did this; he waited for her to brush her hands free of the trash which the wood had left upon them, before he spoke; and when he did so, his tone was very quiet, but there was a decided protest in it;

"I wish you would not go—you know, I do not like Westmore."

"Nor do I, dear," she replied. She came over and stood by him, with her hand resting upon his shoulder. Then she continued:

"But you must admit, Alex, the necessity for some kind of practical step. We cannot go on repeating this morning. I have been thinking it all over, and this is the only possible thing—it seems to me. This afternoon it has come to me as the immediate course to take. I have thought of it before, as you know, but this is the first time I have felt myself capable of doing it, and I am sure, that it is better for me to go while I am in this frame of mind."

"Could we not write?" asked Galbraith, hoping that he might find some other way for her.

"Yes, we might," she replied. "But it would mean delay, and finally I should have to go to him, or he would have to come to us, and so it is far better, I am sure, to have it all over now while I feel myself capable of going through with it."

"Well, I suppose you are right," replied Galbraith. He was annoyed, but he knew that it was unjust in him to be so, for helpless as he was to better their fortunes, he felt that he had no right to stand in Helen's way of doing what she thought was wise, and simply, too, because of an indescribable prejudice which he entertained against the one man who might possibly help her to a satisfactory career. Helen knew just how he felt about it, and nothing but the great necessity of the case could have made it possible for her to act in opposition to his views.

"You must remember, dear," she said sweetly,

hoping that by being just she might make it easier for Galbraith and herself also, "that we know nothing against Mr. Westmore; we only do not like him."

"Yes, that is true," said Alex, "and he has undoubtedly always *seemed* to wish to be kind and helpful. But he *is* an offensive man,—he suggests unsavory things, no matter what his successes."

"In this case, we will hope," said Helen with a laugh, as she stooped and kissed her husband, "that he is not as black as he is painted."

"He would have to be very black indeed, not to be good to my little girl," said Galbraith, his lips lingering on Helen's brow, as she stooped to him.

"Now, you must not worry, dear. I shall not be gone any longer than is necessary. I will send Jane to you. She will light the lamps and mend the fire, and serve your tea, if I am late, and altogether I do not doubt we shall get over this unpleasant task with great distinction to ourselves."

She strove to be cheerful and hopeful, and Galbraith, appreciating her bravery, tried to smile upon her as she bade him good-by; but as he watched her depart from the house he felt peculiarly alone and helpless. It was the first time, since he had known her, that she had turned from him to someone else for help and advice. The realization that necessity alone prompted her to it, made it none the less bitter for him; his own impotency was only thereby emphasized, and impressed upon him with renewed force.

CHAPTER II.

In September the Jersey meadows make a surprising display of gold and purple tints, but this is nothing to the dazzling effects to be seen in late October upon the surrounding hillsides. The little forest above the Galbraith cottage was aglow with all the afternoon glory of a western sky, when Helen started forth upon her errand, of which she had with difficulty spoken to her husband. The more she thought of it, the more her mind became fixed upon the purpose she had taken in regard to Mr. Westmore. It was certainly unfortunate that the only person who might render the Galbraiths any help at this critical time should be one who did not possess the confidence of either. Yet Helen tried to persuade herself, as she had tried to persuade Alex, that the distrust with which Westmore inspired them both was without rightful foundation. While Mr. Westmore had never been a personal friend of Helen's parents, he had come from the same town, had known of them in his young life, and was thus perfectly justified in displaying an interest in Helen and her husband, when he discovered them in New York. While she went mentally over this ground and all the details connected with it, she still felt that Westmore's character was not to be thoroughly relied upon. Yet out of the

mists that surrounded her, she could see no other way than to seek his assistance. This course involved an unusual sacrifice of self, and in making a deliberate choice of it Helen was conscious, in some subtle way, of her own strength and dignity as she had never before been conscious of them.

The roadway leading to the railway station was muddy from the rain of the morning, but Helen walked forward rapidly, stepping lightly from pool to pool, breathing in with a keen zest the cool, crisp air which came blowing over the broad Jersey flats. For the moment she was content. The wooded heights seemed to have caught the trick of the sunset, so dazzlingly beautiful did they appear as she looked back upon them. The wide reach of meadows through which she walked was almost as wonderful as in May; it sent up a thousand different voices, indicating so many forms of life. A sense of mystery rested upon the scene, appealing to Helen with a strange, personal force. She was starting forth upon an untried way, leading she knew not whither. She determined, however, not to think in detail of what she was about to do, or of the consequences her action might involve. She forced her mind to dwell only upon the motive which impelled her. Viewing her resolve in this light, nothing could move her. Having settled the matter with Galbraith and herself, she felt that the world was in no way concerned with it.

Thinking of these things, walking firmly and rapidly, all eagerness to reach the land of desires, she presented a very charming picture of grace and beauty, the finest type of dignified y

womanhood, yet as unwilling to surrender absolutely to an adverse fate as were the meadows across which she passed reluctant to acknowledge the sovereignty of winter. A close observer would have noted a rare degree of silent passion written upon the face of this young woman, indicating vast emotional powers as yet uncontrolled. These emotional powers had indeed never been fully comprehended by anyone, not even by Galbraith who so loved her. People who were struck by Helen's tall, slender presence and beautiful face were nearly always misled by the quiet dignity of her manner as to the vital forces of her nature. Just what impression she made was evident this afternoon, when, exhilarated by her walk and glowing with suppressed excitement, she stepped upon the platform of the railway station. The crowd gathered there turned as if by instinct to observe her ; the simplest market-man among them noticed about her a certain distinction of manner, as of one who had lived in high company. This quality in her struck with a keen sense of personal delight a certain gentleman loitering there, evidently with no greater object than the observation of the mixed crowd awaiting the north-bound train. He was undoubtedly a person of fashion and not unattractive looking, though too small of stature and delicate of build to convey an idea of virile strength. His clear-cut, sharp features evidenced cynicism, but he seemed also to be a man with a keen eye for beauty, for he stared at Helen Galbraith with open admiration. Presently he stepped to her side and spoke in a low tone of salutation.

"Why, Mr. Tompson!" Helen exclaimed in surprise.

"Indeed, this is unexpected after so stormy a day," she added.

He joined her in her promenade back and forth, but it was with difficulty he could keep pace with her long swinging stride. For this reason he had always felt at a disadvantage when walking with her, and it put him now into an unpleasant frame of mind. Her greeting, too, irritated him—it was scarcely cordial—and he felt that he had a right to expect more of her. While preparing himself to indulge his temper, Helen suddenly veered, becoming cordiality and graciousness personified.

"Alex will be so glad to have you. He is quite alone, except for Jane; it will be a great comfort."

"Then you are not going to return with me?" said Tompson, half protestingly and half interrogatively. Seeing that she disregarded these words, he put a more direct question. "You are in for an afternoon in the city, I suppose?"

"Yes," she replied, "and a disagreeable afternoon, too, I fear; it is all business—a thing I have no great talent for, it seems."

"One cannot expect to possess all the virtues," remarked Tompson insinuatingly, looking closely into her face, which to him was quite the most beautiful face in all the world.

"Well, no, not exactly," said Helen, assuming an air of lofty contempt, being always disdainful of such remarks when they came from Andrew Tompson.

"A woman, however," she continued, "is right-

fully supposed to have an average amount of common-sense to be used for all the practical needs of life; and often I feel that I fall short of even this demand, especially when an emergency arises."

"You are certainly not exceptional in that respect," said Tompson. "It seems equally true of all people, except of the abnormally wise, that they never do the right thing at the right time, or say the proper word in the proper place—just as our best witticisms occur to us when we have no audience."

Fearing she had already given Tompson too much of a clue to her personal anxieties, Helen quickly changed the conversation to some comments upon two of Van Gravesand's etchings which she had seen at Keppel's on her last trip into the city, and which she knew Tompson had purchased. Tompson prided himself upon being a connoisseur and a collector, and it would have delighted him now to talk with Helen about art matters, but before he had time to launch forth upon his pet subject, Helen's train pulled into the station and she disappeared within the day coach.

For a few moments Andrew Tompson stood watching the train as it rushed on its way toward New York. He knew full well that Helen Galbraith tolerated him merely on account of her husband's friendship for him, yet each time that he received fresh proof of this fact it irritated him beyond control. Somehow, he reflected, must he find a way to make her regard him more favorably; until then it would be necessary to content himself, as formerly, with Galbraith's friendship. This, of course, was

the only thing for a wise, self-contained man to do, but it did not accord with Tompson's desires. Twirling his cane nervously he left the station, and turning his face in the direction of the public roadway which led to the Galbraith cottage, he walked forward with an unusual haste.

In that active business quarter of New York, about the neighborhood of Broadway and Fulton Streets, where the full tide of life may be best observed, from morning until night the scene being one struggling throng of vehicles and pedestrians, just here are located many of those massive and imposing buildings which a few years ago so distinguished New York from other American cities. On the third floor of one of these buildings Mr. Westmore had his private offices. If one had asked Mr. Westmore's profession, he would have been told that the gentleman in question was a capitalist. His influence in Wall Street was supposed to be great. It was there, years ago, that his own fortune had been made, and unable to separate entirely his present habits from those of the past, he was ever and anon returning to the field of his former glory, if for no other reason than the gratification of personal pride in measuring himself against the younger men who figured there conspicuously at this time. Risky as similar adventures might be for others, for Westmore they were considered as absolutely safe. And Westmore deserved thoroughly the esteem in which he was held, for he was indeed too wily an old fox to hazard his private fortune in uncertain speculations. He knew the markets as well as any man in New York, and with a keen ap

preciation of the first law of nature managed to indulge his gambling propensities, yet at the same time to take excellent care of his own interests. But Westmore had other ambitions than those of the speculator. He wished to be recognized as a power in business enterprises of a strictly legitimate and respectable nature ; to this end he used his accumulated fortune lavishly. The result had been even more satisfactory than he had anticipated. To those behind the scenes he was known to be the ruling spirit of at least three banking houses of fine standing, besides owning the controlling interest in an important and influential daily paper. In the allotment of his time, Mr. Westmore assigned very little of it to what men call pleasure. The various schemes which occupied his mind furnished to one of his temperament sufficient diversity. He followed business pursuits as closely as if he were a young man making a start in life. His mornings were given to the affairs of the various institutions with which he was connected ; from two to five in the afternoons he shut himself up in his private office, looking into and arranging his individual affairs. Those who wished to seek him for consultations or interviews must do so between these hours. To many visitors he did not reveal himself, but he was not difficult of approach to those already known to him who possessed his confidence.

Mr. Westmore's private offices consisted of three rooms, the first being a kind of general reception-room, where a young man, who showed a great willingness to answer questions or to offer excuses, seemed to be always in attendance. The second

room of this suite was used entirely for business purposes: silent accountants and hard-worked stenographers here spent their energies according to Mr. Westmore's demands. The third and last room, however, was large and well-lighted, and presented in every way a very different appearance from the others. Here, evidently, individual taste had been exercised, for when Helen Galbraith was ushered in, she found herself in a most charming apartment, unlike anything she had imagined as existing amid so businesslike an atmosphere. Opening toward the west, it was lighted at this hour by the rich beams of the October sun. Prints and sketches covered the old-rose-colored walls, and a large writing-table, heaped with books and papers, stood in the center of an exquisitely-wrought Turkish rug, around which the greater part of the floor showed bare and polished. At one end of the room an open fire burned, making the large apartment seem distinctly homelike and human, an effect increased by many chairs of all shapes and sizes, meant preeminently for comfort. Near the west windows a shelf had been constructed upon which were arranged several earthenware pots planted with hyacinths and narcissi; the sweet, springlike scent of the flowers filled the room to an almost overpowering degree. Coming suddenly from the cool, fresh air of the outside world into the heat and perfume of this luxurious apartment, and already overwrought by an intensity of excitement, Helen felt herself all at once grow faint, and had not Mr. Westmore come quickly to her side, she would undoubtedly have fallen to the floor.

"It is the heat and the flowers," she gasped, letting her tall, slender figure, quivering now with a violent emotion, sink into the nearest chair. Usually so dignified and self-possessed, Helen was no less surprised at the manner of her entrance than was Mr. Westmore.

"No doubt the room is over-heated," said Mr. Westmore, stepping to one of the windows and opening it.

"Now that is better, is it not?" he asked, coming back to the chair in which Helen sat, and regarding her with anxious solicitude. He often had visitors who displayed very strange freaks of character, but, somehow, with all the knowledge of human nature which they had imparted to him, he was now painfully conscious of having no kind of recipe for the treatment of beautiful young women who came stumbling into his office in a fainting condition.

Helen, however, rallied much more quickly than he apprehended, and, smiling up at him, seemed to ask his pardon for creating so embarrassing a situation.

"I am glad to see you here in any condition, Mrs. Galbraith, and on any errand," he replied, adding—"Your presence here is the crowning good fortune of a very fortunate day."

"I wish I could say that good fortune brings me here," said Helen, now revived and rising to her full height, which struck Westmore as being exceptionally impressive.

"There should be few misfortunes in *your* case, Mrs. Galbraith, that could not easily be set aright."

As Mr. Westmore spoke he did not look at Helen, but occupied himself in placing a comfortable chair for her near his writing-table, at which he then seated himself. His remark was made in an unpleasantly suggestive tone, and for a moment Helen stood by the chair which he had placed for her, pressing her hand tightly against its cushioned back, and observing him with a quiet scrutiny.

Possessed of a certain taste for luxurious and artistic surroundings, Mr. Westmore was after all a man of affairs. Any knowledge he had acquired of literature was more the result of travel and the reading induced by it, than of a native taste for books. He was not a man who could enjoy a book or a picture for the purely mental and spiritual pleasure to be got out of that book or picture. He learned things and acquired habits and tastes, because to know these things, to possess these habits and tastes gave him a certain distinction among the men with whom his fine business capacities had placed him. Above all Mr. Westmore loved power; he liked to feel that men—and women too for that matter—were under his control, marching, as it were, to his orders. He was wont to be very indulgent towards people until he had them within his grasp, but once having closed his hand firmly upon them, his hold was not likely to relax, and he showed himself to be the most uncompromising and exacting of masters. It was this quality that had given him his position in the financial world. All interests committed to his care were protected by him without concessions to anyone; the embarrassments of others he never allowed to affect his own

actions in the slightest degree; and any colleague who seemed likely to drag him down was immediately got rid of with all hope of his return summarily dispelled. In such manner as this had Mr. Westmore proceeded on his way, success following success, a shining light among the bankers and brokers of New York, and a happy illustration of that delightfully ironical saying, that "the Lord helps those who help themselves."

Helen, of course, had no way of knowing thoroughly the character of the man before whom she now stood, yet by means of his own unguarded remarks at the times when they had met during the past few years, she had formed a not incorrect idea of what manner of man he was. She at least partially realized that he could be unrelenting, and that he would not be likely to stop short of making an extreme demand of others, if it suited his purposes so to do. Still, it did not occur to her to be afraid of him, nor to feel that in placing herself under obligations to him she was surrendering her liberty into his hands. Some unpleasant consequences must, she knew, attend her present action, but these she was prepared to accept and endure. Just what form these consequences might take her mind had not troubled itself to consider. She was pure and honest—truly a virgin heart so far as sin was concerned—and when she thought of an entire sacrifice of self for the welfare of her husband, who was so infinitely dear to her, she thought only of something beautiful and holy which would make her peace with God and man. As Mr. Westmore looked up at last from his desk and observed Helen standing

erect before him, her grace and beauty thrilled him, man of sixty that he was, as he had never been thrilled before. The look of admiration which he flashed upon her was so unmistakable that Helen could not fail to observe it. This, taken together with the tone he had used as she came into his presence, caused her indignation to rise, but Alex's necessities were too great to allow her to turn back and spare herself. She was resolved, however, to show Mr. Westmore what she thought of the unpleasant attitude he had assumed toward her.

"You always choose to be personal in your remarks, Mr. Westmore," she said, still standing. "Did it ever occur to you that to some people this kind of thing is exceedingly disagreeable?"

Westmore looked up at her quickly and questioningly; he was not accustomed to being criticised, and for the moment it annoyed him. He had a nervous habit when irritated or perplexed of running his left forefinger beneath his heavy black mustache and of passing it back and forth there rapidly. He did this now vehemently for a few moments; then letting his hand fall upon his desk, his irritation passing away, he said:

"I really do not understand you. There is nothing you women seem to value so much as personal beauty, and yet when a man makes the merest reference to it, by way of compliment, you assume an air of offended dignity. It is incomprehensible —but then—" he added, a conciliatory and amused smile coming to his face—"but then the whole woman question, I acknowledge, is entirely beyond my powers of solution."

Helen, having every reason for not wishing to provoke a quarrel with Mr. Westmore, was glad to avail herself of the more pleasant turn their conversation was taking.

"The very best women, you know, are contradictory, though it may not always be safe to say so," said Helen. She was thoroughly mistress of herself now, and sitting down she went on talking.

"No doubt it is very fortunate for my sex that women are a law unto themselves; otherwise, I fear, many of their actions could never be explained."

"You think the old excuse, *it is merely a woman's way*, the best excuse still, despite the wonderful claims of the new woman?" asked Mr. Westmore quizzically, surveying Helen with a smile.

"The new woman, I observe, is very willing to fall back upon the old standards, when it comes to a matter of feeling," replied Helen.

"But you—Mrs. Galbraith—have I not heard you say something about the advancement of women?" asked Mr. Westmore, still quizzical and amused.

"Possibly you have," she answered. "In theory, I believe that I have a right to all the privileges allotted to men—but then, in fact, you know—" Helen paused, and, looking directly at Mr. Westmore, smiled heartily, notwithstanding her personal objections to him, for the absurdity of the situation struck her—that they two should be seriously discussing the woman question! "Well, in fact," she continued, "I find that I am but a woman after all, emotional, nervous at times, and dependent—no

doubt very like my dear old grandmothers, without their simple goodness," she quickly added.

"And you think you are a fair sample of women as a class?" asked Mr. Westmore.

"Yes, I am sure of it," she replied; "women the world over are much the same by nature, and up to the present time I do not believe that we have been seriously affected as a sex by evolution. In a few thousand years more, provided we are very strict with ourselves, we may eliminate some of our weaknesses. Until then——"

"Until then," interrupted Mr. Westmore, "you will remain, I trust, just as you are, the most delightful part of God's creation." As he said this he thought what a charming illustration Helen was of the point in question. Had the distribution of blessings in this life been left to him, he felt sure that he would have asked nothing better than that she should have been bestowed upon him. Considering the grand financial success he had made of life, Mr. Westmore felt himself justified in rebelling a little against his domestic condition. It was impossible to lose sight of the fact that he was an exceedingly good-looking man, distinguished in bearing, who would have made a very fit companion for some beautiful woman such as Helen Galbraith. Of course it was useless to lament about a thing of this kind, but the conviction made his plain, bad-mannered wife and unpolished children none the less offensive to his taste. Mr. Westmore, like many another man in a similar situation, while thinking with something like disgust of his wife, failed to remember that long ago, when he first came to New

York seeking his fortune, her plain domestic virtues had been his very best guarantee for success. In fact, it was her strong practical character and ability for household economy, joined to very simple tastes, that had made his first successes at all possible to him. But having cultivated in himself an eye for beauty, he could think only of what had been denied him. As his gaze rested now upon Helen, she noted an expression of restless unhappiness that passed over his face. Strongly responsive by nature, Helen's sympathies were in a measure aroused for him; and, this being the case, her own errand seemed to her less difficult of approach, and she went at once to the subject which consumed her thoughts.

"I am here to-day, Mr. Westmore," she said, "as a very apt illustration of the weakness of woman, and of her readiness to turn to man for advice and help in the hour of adversity." She spoke with some embarrassment, for it was entirely opposed to her nature to call attention to her own necessities, or to make any kind of personal appeal. Her embarrassment was evident to Mr. Westmore, though it did not touch him in the way it might have touched a more finely-organized man.

"I do not like to hear you suggest such a thing as weakness as connected with yourself, Mrs. Galbraith," he replied. "But if it gives me an opportunity of advising and aiding you, I am not going to perjure myself by saying that I am deeply sorry."

He drew his chair more closely to the table, looked for a few moments over a paper spread out before him, and waited for her to go on.

"I must tell you a long story, Mr. Westmore, if you have time to listen, and then you must advise me what to do," said Helen.

"I have all the afternoon to do as I wish with," he replied, "and I am very glad to listen." He then fastened his gaze attentively upon her, while she, inwardly strung to the highest pitch of deep emotion, yet outwardly calm and serene, told him in the most straightforward and unreserved manner the whole burden of her heart.

And it was a heartrending story which she unfolded, bringing out with pathetic distinctness the terrible fight made by her to reconquer life and aspiration for her wrecked, despairing husband.

When she allowed herself to speak of her love for Galbraith, of what his ruined career meant to her personally, and of how his dying condition took from her now the last great hope, her voice fell to an intense and sorrowing note, which must have softened a heart of stone.

"And so I come to you, Mr. Westmore, asking you to do something for me. My pride is gone. I am humbled. I find myself insufficient for the task that has been set me. I turn to you as the only one who can lead me on to what I desire. Writing —writing of some kind—is the one thing that I can do—the only thing, I may say. I have small gift for it, I know, but what gifts I have lie in that direction; besides, it is the only thing I can do and still remain during the day with Alex—and this is all-important, as you must know."

Never before had Westmore been so touched. In justice to his better nature be it said, at that mo-

ment he had no desire to master and control the pure-hearted, sweet woman who sat in sorrow before him. Unfortunately, his better nature never retained the ascendency long, and the love which was then created in his time-worn, impaired heart could not, by natural law, escape the tarnish which his less fine instincts habitually put upon everything connected with him.

Before he was conscious of what he did, he was stooping over Helen, grasping her hand and saying, in what for him were tones of tender consideration :

"Poor child ! Poor child !"

In an instant Helen sprang to her feet.

"Do not give me compassion, Mr. Westmore !" she exclaimed. "Give me a chance for independence—for a decent support—for well-paid work—that is all I ask." Then recognizing that she was taking a rather imperious tone for one asking a favor, she added more gently—

"And I will admit your goodness and be your friend."

While Helen spoke, Mr. Westmore had walked back to his writing-table, and now turning over the manuscript which Helen had placed there as the last completed collaboration of Galbraith and herself, he said :

"I will take this to our editor and see what he thinks. But—" he laid down the manuscript and stood looking directly at Helen— "no matter what his opinion may be, *something* shall be done. You can depend upon that, Mrs. Galbraith."

"I thank you." She spoke simply, rising in her

most dignified manner, preparing to go. She moved towards him, extending her hand.

"I am going down with you," he said, buttoning his coat, and crossing the room to get his hat. After his kindness she had no right to refuse him this, yet she wished that he would let her go alone.

Together they moved toward the door. The last rays of the sun had faded from the room, which, lighted now merely by the blaze from the open fire, lay more than half in shadow. The fire, unattended for several hours, had burnt itself out. The blaze which brightened one side of the room flared up suddenly, the logs from which it came broke and fell apart, burying themselves beneath a bed of ashes. The room was in almost total darkness; Mr. Westmore and Helen stood side by side before the door, ready to go down together. Suddenly Helen felt a hand grasp her own. For a moment her fingers seemed crushed and bruised beneath the convulsive hold that had been laid upon them. With the free hand she seized the knob of the door and opened it, and rushed into a vestibule which formed the entrance to Mr. Westmore's private room. He followed her; then passing in front of her, said simply: "This way, please," and she, rendered powerless by her indignation, unable to protest in any way, followed him without a word. In a moment or two they stood together in the open street, but even then they did not speak. Helen hastened into the first surface car that passed. Even to the platform of the car he was by her side, assisting her to enter. When she had stumbled over an old woman's basket, and fallen into the nearest vacant

seat, she turned to see what had become of him, but he had disappeared and the car was speeding on its way.

"Why had he spoiled it all?" As she asked herself this question she felt that there was not scorn enough in the world to express her thoughts of him, yes, and of herself. The complacency of her fellow-passengers and of the innocent conductor seemed to her unbearable. She longed to rise up out of her seat and shake them all soundly, showing them what depths of contempt and vehemence were in her. However, she kept her seat quietly, continuing on her way to the ferry, apparently as well-mannered and sweet-tempered a lady as ever passed that way.

CHAPTER III.

"You remember, Tompson," said Galbraith, "that immortal sentence of Goethe's—'Fortunate is he who at an early age knows what Art is?'" The afternoon sun had disappeared below the horizon. Jane had come into the living room of the Galbraith cottage, renewed the fire, lighted the lamp, and left Galbraith and Tompson together. Galbraith always enjoyed Tompson's visits; they furnished him with an opportunity to talk on his favorite theme to an appreciative listener. Andrew Tompson, who had always had the means and leisure to live life on his own terms, had preferred above all things to give himself to cultivating a love and knowledge of the fine arts, and the original, bold criticisms made by his friend Galbraith, upon men and methods, had been an inestimable benefit to him. Apart from what Tompson thus gained intellectually, his visits to the cottage were for another reason agreeable to him: with Galbraith he could be thoroughly himself, not posing for greater than he really was. In the various clubs to which he belonged and in society generally, Tompson had assumed the character of a very accomplished individual; but as with all of his culture he was in truth neither profound nor learned, it had been at times difficult to sustain the rôle he undertook to play. With Galbraith he only sat and listened, knowing

that nothing greater than sympathy was demanded of him—and when he talked he confined himself to things he knew something of.

Galbraith and Tompson, who had been college chums, were first drawn together by a common love of art. They had met again in Europe, where Galbraith's association with the schools and academies opened many delightful avenues to Tompson. Without any creative power whatever, Tompson possessed genuinely artistic tastes, and an intelligent appreciation of the subjects in which he was interested. So it happened that through all the years of their intercourse he and Galbraith had been mutually helpful and suggestive to each other. Had work been necessary to Tompson, it is very possible that he might have accomplished something worthy in life; as it was, at the age of thirty-eight he remained a mere dilettante artist and *littérateur*.

Galbraith repeated his remark—"You remember it, do you not?" Tompson, rolling a cigarette daintily between his fingers, meditated a moment. In speaking his tone was always quiet, a little measured, and pleasantly hesitating.

"Yes, I remember it well," he replied at last, "and it is a sentence implying much. It would be interesting to know just what ground Goethe meant to cover by that remark." Having rolled his cigarette to his satisfaction and lighted it, he took a seat near Galbraith, who was half reclining in a cushioned chair, which had been placed so that his gaze could fall easily upon the burning logs as well as upon the miscellaneous books and papers strewn over the center-table.

"The art of which Goethe spoke would extend, you may be sure, to many things believed to lie outside of art. The general view of art is very narrow, you must remember—sickeningly so, born of obtuseness and ignorance. Think, for instance, of how long the opinion has prevailed, and among people highly educated concerning other matters, that art is to be found nowhere but in Europe. Think of the absurdity : that art is the product only of the most rich and civilized nations ; a thing born and bred solely beneath academical influences." Galbraith rose to a sitting posture, as he spoke ; a fine fire of enthusiasm commenced to show itself upon his splendidly-shaped, impressive face. "It was a desire, no doubt," he continued, "to correct this superficial view of a deep, far-reaching subject, that prompted Goethe to pen that sentence I have just quoted."

"Well, yes," replied Tompson, "no doubt that was his desire ; but it is difficult to induce people to take so broad a view of any subject, especially when they have concentrated all their mental powers upon one side of the question—and you know it is generally one side of it only that can be seen or understood by them."

"There," said Galbraith, rising from his chair and standing above Tompson—"there is just the point I have been thinking of in connection with my own case. The younger artists and art critics here in New York censure me because, as they say, I insist too much on knowledge. Many of them seem to think a color-box and brushes are all that are necessary to make a painter. They contend that

most of the great geniuses of art cared very little for knowledge, and did little to acquire it."

"But is that true?" asked Tompson.

"No, of course it is not true, not in the sense these men mean it. To accept it as true is to destroy every chance of getting fine work done. When the average American mind has set itself to study art, it reveals some remarkably queer characteristics. It can with all seriousness spend unlimited time upon a slipshod course of work, can deal in the most careless manner with the most difficult things, and can then plume itself with the air of a master upon a semi-accomplishment—never for a moment estimating itself or others with anything like correctness. Now the right kind of knowledge and plenty of it would set all this right." Galbraith fell back again into his cushioned chair. For a few moments his gaze rested upon the burning logs; he was thinking of something painful, possibly irritating to him. At last looking up he said:

"But when I say these things I am loudly censured—I am entirely misunderstood."

"No, not entirely," replied Tompson; "I have met one man recently who understands you, who feels the truth of what you have said." Galbraith lifted his head, a look of inquiry lighting up his saddened, deeply-lined features. Tompson continued:

"A few days ago I was in the studio of Chase—such a delightful man, as you know, and such a delightful place! Well, Mr. Chase and myself were speaking about you; he had been reading a short article of yours in the *Art Review*, and it interested

him. He seemed already to know a good deal about you, but he was anxious to hear still more, and for this reason he questioned me in regard to you."

"When I was in Munich," mused Galbraith, "I remember well how redolent the whole art atmosphere of the place was of Chase and Shirlaw and Duveneck. In fact, the most pleasant impressions I have of these men, especially of Mr. Chase, are from the memories of them lingering there among the American students. After our day's work was done many of us were accustomed to meet every evening for dinner at the Max Emanuel Café. This had been the favorite resort of Chase and his friends in the years of his student life. Those evenings and those dinners I can never forget. When the meal was over huge flagons of beer were placed before us, our pipes were lighted, and soon wreaths of smoke so softened the gleam of the candles that the room seemed filled with a poetic haze; then it was the real talk began, and often this talk concerned itself greatly with Chase and with the memories he had left behind him."

"I had forgotten that you did not know Mr. Chase in those days."

"No, I saw him for the first time in New York, after my return. It is a pleasure to have seen him. His dreamy, contemplative face, lit up by an occasional flash of great emotion, is a thing always to remember. I recall also that in speaking he frequently uses a certain eloquent gesture which makes his manner impressive. I noticed this especially on one occasion when I heard him speak with great feeling of American art, of his ambitions for it and

his hopes. He seemed fired by a sturdiness of purpose which, I felt, must result in genuine and exalted art."

The recollection of these things, of which Galbraith had just spoken, thrilled and moved him ; as he finished he rose from his seat, this time commencing to stride back and forth through the room. Tompson, who was quite accustomed to his friend's habits, was struck more forcibly than ever before with the great change in Galbraith which time and disease were working. Tompson had not very quick sympathies, yet to one even as unemotional as himself, the sunken chest and stooping shoulders of this man, who had once been so perfect a type of masculine strength, could not but appeal with a strange pathos. It was indeed enough to bring tears to look upon that magnificent head and classical face standing out in such startling, tragic contrast above Galbraith's armless, wasting body. Back and forth, silent and meditative, Galbraith passed for awhile through the room, then stopping in front of Tompson he said : "And what did Mr. Chase say—of me, I mean ?"

Tompson laid his cigarette upon the table, and commenced to speak in his measured, halting way.

"I am glad to tell you," he said, "that Mr. Chase seemed to think you had struck the right note in your criticisms. He told me, also, that he believed from what he knew of you and of your work, that had you been able to pursue your career, you would have become one of the foremost founders of that real school of American art, the establishment of which has been the great aim of his life."

Galbraith remained silent for some time, but the intense pleasure Mr. Chase's words had given him was very evident upon his countenance.

At last he asked, still standing before Tompson, "Did not he, like all the others, think I had been too severe upon that extravagant impressionist school which is such a thorn in the flesh to me?"

"He said nothing especially about that, but, knowing his general attitude towards art, I am sure he realizes your meaning."

"There can be no doubt," said Galbraith, speaking very slowly, appearing to choose carefully each word to exactly express his thought—"that impressionism—the attempt to paint out-door nature as it actually appears, and to translate its broad effects rather than its details—this attempt undoubtedly presents the genuine spirit of art. For this reason all good art must have in it the evidence, more or less, of a subjective influence. The artist, however, should remember, that art, after all, can find expression only through material means, and that so long as this remains true, the artist has to make certain concessions to the limitations of substance. Now modern impressionism, as represented by its extreme supporters, is, to me, like trying to represent the soul without the body. It is an absurd attempt, and ends, of course, in an absurd result." Again Galbraith began to pace up and down the room; he had been speaking of matters very vital to him, and the deep emotion of his nature, stirred now, sought an outlet for itself. Tompson knew too well the importance of such talk to Galbraith to stop him, and he knew also, that, instead of inflict-

ing any sort of injury upon him, it would act much as a safety-valve, whereby his pent-up feeling might escape.

Quietly lighting another cigarette, Tompson kept his seat, looking at Galbraith and merely saying—

"Yes, I see—it is very plain, as you put it—and I am sure the best artists must all agree with you."

"Possibly," replied Galbraith, "but it will be a long while yet before the best artists have the principal say in these things—and in the meantime much mischief is being done. Now these extreme impressionist fellows contend that we want to eliminate the ideal from art—as if there could ever be any art were the ideal eliminated! What is art anyhow, I should like to know, but a reaching out after the ideal? Everything great rests upon this. The more of an idealist the poet or the painter is, the nearer he comes to fulfilling his mission. Why, the idealist is, of course, the man of genius, the creator, and without him no art could exist. However, because the man of genius is an idealist, it is no excuse for him to become so mystical that his thought takes no shape, conveys no distinct impression—there is no reason why he should become all mist and vapor. For the very reason that he is an idealist and can put into his work a divine element, it is his business to learn how to harmonize the objective and subjective—the material and the spiritual phases of art. The painter, who gives us what is called a finished picture, represents not only what is visible to the material eye, but combines with this effect a suggestion of the intellectual impression made on his mental vision. This is to be an ideal-

ist, and this, also, is to be a true impressionist. If you care to look the matter up and verify by learned criticism what I say, you will see that I am correct —and you will find that such an idealist or impressionist as the one of which I speak was Turner; such another was Corot—to go further back, such another was Velasquez; and such to-day are the Japanese."

No listener could have been more appreciative than was Tompson. Galbraith was the only man he had ever really cared for, and he enjoyed his enthusiasm about art—besides, he was very anxious to appear as an original thinker upon the same subject himself, so he listened with close attention, quietly resolved to use any of Galbraith's ideas that might suit his own purposes.

A striking contrast existed between these two men who had been friends for so long. The one enthusiastic, solemnly earnest, free from all consciousness of self, with the agony of a deep personal tragedy written upon every line of his body and face;—the other calm, well-mannered rather than serious, cultured and esthetic, yet with no earnest purpose, painfully conscious of self, of its importance and rights—a thorough type of the man who acknowledges no obligations to others, who assumes no responsible ties. Tompson had always liked the pleasant things of life, and Alexander Galbraith represented them to him in one form. For this reason, chiefly, had Tompson followed up and maintained his friendship with Galbraith. The same inclinations made him a regular visitor at the Galbraith cottage, for, though very simple, its arrange-

ment and furnishings were of a kind to please an esthetic eye. Every piece of furniture, every rug, every bit of china, every print upon the wall, though inexpensive, had been chosen for some artistic reason, and were so placed as entirely to satisfy an artistic taste. With Helen as mistress of this delightfully arranged retreat, and with Galbraith there as a sort of dying prophet, speaking burning, vital words upon his beloved theme of art, Tompson's visits to the cottage gave him an exquisite sense of pleasure, and always brought to his observation something of new and personal interest. It was impossible that Tompson should not have felt a certain human distress over Galbraith's affliction, but being, as said, a man not quickly responsive to sorrow and pain, he generally managed to put aside such unpleasant impressions and to yield himself only to the agreeable influences to be obtained from his visits. This afternoon, however, the shrunken, worn appearance of Galbraith forced itself unusually upon Tompson's observation, and his words, Tompson felt, were more than ordinarily pregnant with intensity and solemnity of meaning. Somewhat exhausted from the energy with which he had spoken Galbraith now went back to his cushioned chair, and dropping wearily into it rested for a few moments.

Tompson turned leisurely the leaves of a book which lay near him on the table—

"You have here some rather good photographs," he said after a while; "have you seen them? They have a delicious American flavor to them." As he spoke he held up the book so that Galbraith

could see one of the prints which seemed to him good.

"Yes," replied Galbraith, "I have seen them. Helen was showing them to me the other day, and I was struck by the very thing you have just noticed —the American flavor that is there. Now that is the really vital point in our art. If we are ever to have a great school of American art our painters *must* find their sources of inspiration here at home."

"But is it not very difficult for a man, who has received all his technique in either Paris or Munich, and has at the same time acquired a French or German point of view, to get again into sympathy with things purely American, and to give to them the native touch?"

"Of course it is difficult," replied Galbraith, "possibly the most difficult thing any generation of artists was ever called upon to do. Educated in the capitals of Europe where art influences are dominant, it is natural that our young men should look upon life here as a kind of exile. Most of them have so surrendered their imaginations to the pictorial effects everywhere to be found in Europe, that the love of their own country has been very nearly effaced from their hearts. When they come back to America they can see nothing but the esthetic barrenness of our people, and the paucity of our art treasures. Some of them go so far as to insist that our wonderful American scenery is devoid of artistic effects."

"But so long as our young men cannot get in this country just the kind of training and influences that combine to fit an artist thoroughly for his

work, what is to be done about it?" asked Tompson, laying down the book which had attracted him, in order to look at Galbraith while he talked.

"It seems to me," said Galbraith, "that there is only one solution of this problem which is puzzling every one deeply interested in American art. The young artist while studying abroad should strive never to lose sight of the fact that he is an American and that his future is to be wholly identified with American art. This is difficult, as you say; only the men who have fought this fight know how difficult—but it is the only way to protect the American artist's sympathies from becoming biased by his foreign experiences."

"Even then it does not seem to me quite possible. You have called my attention to it and I am always watching for the signs; but there is not one of them, not the most American among them, who is not perceptibly affected by his foreign experiences."

"No doubt this is true, but in time it can be cured. Our young American must cultivate in himself a capacity for two things. He must be ready to acquire everything in the way of technique that he possibly can from his foreign teachers; at the same time he must learn to look at things not as his foreign teachers may look at them, but purely as they appear to his own perceptions."

"There is something of a tendency of late in this direction," said Tompson.

"Yes," said Galbraith eagerly, "and the results some day will be wonderful. There is no reason why after a few years we should not know an

American landscape or an American figure the minute we glance at it, just as to-day we know at sight a French or Dutch landscape or figure. As soon as our painters learn to observe our life and to paint it into their work, we shall see the birth of a truly national art. We certainly have no lack of subjects in America—the difficulty has been and still is that our men have not learned how to look at things."

"That is very plain," said Tompson. "Take New York, for instance. How full of suggestions!"

"Why, of course," said Galbraith with enthusiasm, "the streets of New York are as rich for a painter as are the boulevards of Paris."

"In my tours about the city, hunting up odd, artistic effects in old houses and off-cast furniture, I find everywhere," said Tompson, "the finest opportunities for the artist."

"I have seen," continued Galbraith, "most of the world's great cities, many of them famed for their beauty, and of this I am sure—that none of them can compare with New York in point of natural advantages, while in artistic beauty she is the equal of most of them. In what great city of Europe do you find the same brilliancy of atmosphere as here? And nowhere have I ever seen such sunsets as are to be had any fine afternoon from the rear end of an East River ferry-boat."

"Mr. Chase, I should think," said Tompson, "was just the man to take hold of these points, and to direct the American mind toward their observation."

"That, I take it, is his aim—to create an Ameri-

can school of art solely out of American material. If any man of this generation can do it, he can, for Mr. Chase is never a dreamer of dreams—he is a painter pure and simple, who is concerned pre-eminently with the things about him. As a teacher, I know that he has an earnest desire to develop whatever is original in his pupils ; he aims to make each one see for himself and to paint as he has seen."

"Why these things have been so long neglected I cannot understand," said Tompson.

"Oh, that is very easy to explain !" replied Galbraith. "We all know that the test of a great artist is his power to deal with quiet life in the sober daylight. Yet think what labor, what skill are demanded in order that a painter should do well this seemingly simple thing !"

"Certainly, they are, which makes it plain that we have not yet acquired sufficient culture for things to be different."

"Sufficient greatness, I should say," said Galbraith. "Goethe was wont to say that the truest poetry is that woven out of the suggestions gained from simple things. But a man must have much of elemental wisdom and a decided strength of character as an artist to be willing to rest his case purely upon his presentation of simple, familiar things. Yet we must come to this," he continued, "and when we have come to it, we shall then have a great national art."

"This looks like delaying the matter a very long while," said Tompson. "I scarcely expect to see the corner-stone laid in my day."

"There you are mistaken; the corner-stone has already been put in its place, though it may not yet have been built upon. Before it can be built upon and reared into anything like a beautiful, enduring structure, a genuine sympathy in its behalf must be created in all intelligent minds. Has it ever occurred to you," Galbraith asked, "how rare, among writers especially, is any true comprehension of or sympathy for the really artistic mind?"

"I am aware," said Tompson, "that very few writers have anything to say about art or artists that is of any consequence. A great deal of stuff is written on the subject, but little that seems to me interesting, or vital; but," he added, lighting another cigarette, "the artists, I am sure, are greatly to blame for the want of comprehension shown them on the part of writers. They are never willing to give a man credit for any sort of honesty when he writes about art, and they feel an unfeigned contempt for all critics. Take your own case, for example. Who has denounced most your art criticisms? Certainly not the editors, who know nothing about the truth of the subject, but a host of chagrined, disappointed artists who became infuriated at the plain truths you told them about themselves."

"That is very true, I know," replied Galbraith, looking meditatively into the fire, which seemed often to solve many things for him. "Artists and critics are unfortunately nearly always at war with one another. I suppose, when I attempted to become a critic, I forfeited all right to my old fellowship with the men of Bohemia."

"But the artists are only injuring the cause of art in taking this attitude," said Tompson. "It would be far better for the whole fraternity, I am convinced, if they had among themselves a good deal more of sound, searching criticism than they now have."

"Possibly," replied Galbraith, "but I do not think it can be. We artists are not made by nature for criticism; we are made rather for construction. The truth is, the genuine artistic spirit is not often able to follow purely intellectual methods. That is why I have failed so as a writer. Nothing else is responsible for it."

As Galbraith made this final remark he started, listened a moment, and then rising, moved eagerly toward the door. Tompson had also heard the same sound which had attracted the attention of Galbraith; the quick, sudden closing of a gate as it swung back into place, having been opened by some one apparently in great haste. Both men knew well what this sound meant, it was Helen returning. Before either Galbraith or Tompson could reach the door, she had thrown it open and stood before them. Her rich brown hair was somewhat blown by the wind and the dark lines about her eyes showed how fatigued she was, yet the cool, crisp air of the evening had put a wonderful freshness into her cheeks, and she came into the warm, smoke-ladened room, a being of perfect joy and delight to the two men awaiting her return. Without a word she placed her hand on Alex's shoulder as he stooped and kissed her; to Tompson she gave the other hand with a simple "Good evening."

"You are tired, dear," said Galbraith, very quick to notice any change in her.

"Yes, a little. But not so much as you, for I see that Mr. Tompson has been letting you overtalk yourself." Without stopping even to lay aside her coat or hat, she led Galbraith back to his chair, and seating him there, thrust a fresh cushion behind his head as a better support.

"Do you really think, Mrs. Galbraith, that talking hurts Alex?" asked Tompson in a solicitous tone, for he was very anxious not to offend Helen.

"No, not seriously," she replied. "But he is inclined, you know, to overdo the matter, especially when he begins on the virtues of that mistress of his to whom he is so devoted." Helen glanced meaningly at Alex, engaged at the same time in unfastening and throwing aside her coat.

"*Had* I really been talking of that mistress of mine to whom I am so devoted, nothing could have stopped me yet. Don't you know that, Tompson?" said Galbraith, his sad face showing a wonderful change and brightness now that Helen had returned. He saw, however, despite Helen's outer composure of manner, that she was excited and nervous—and knowing her thoroughly, he began to entertain serious fears as to the results of the afternoon. He had not spoken to Tompson of her errand, nor would he have done so in any event; Galbraith discussed his domestic matters with no one. During Tompson's frequent visits to the Galbraiths, he, of course, had gained a pretty clear idea of how things stood with them. He was aware that of late an undue strain had been put upon both Alex and

Helen; and he felt certain that trouble about money was at the bottom of it. Two reasons, however, held him back from speaking of this to Galbraith. The subject never having been mentioned to him, he felt a natural embarrassment at the thought of opening it—he was not sure that Galbraith would not resent his doing so, for he knew him to be an honest, sensible man, who would be likely to speak himself of anything he wished to confide to him. And besides, Tompson was distinctly not the kind of man to reach out after deeds of loving kindness. He possessed a good deal of a certain kind of righteousness, or, rather it should be said, of that virtue termed self-respect—if deeds of charity were thrust upon him, or, if he felt that his position as a man of culture and refinement demanded them of him, he responded, and always in a manner becoming a gentleman. Further than this he, by his mere nature, was not able to go.

The question which Galbraith had put to Tompson was answered by him in words addressed to Helen.

"Art, I am sure, Mrs. Galbraith," he said, "is a poor substitute for yourself, but to state the case correctly, it is the only one we could possibly have admitted in your absence."

Tompson had a way of making set speeches to Helen, who often found them very annoying. This evening, however, she scarcely heard what he said or noticed him at all. She seated herself near Galbraith, resting her elbow on the arm of his chair. The color which the cool air brought into her face was fast disappearing, giving place to her habitual paleness; as this paleness increased the lines about

her face began to show more dark and deep, and Tompson, as well as Galbraith, soon noticed that she was not herself. For some moments she sat looking into the fire, her thoughts evidently busy with some serious matter, while Galbraith and Tompson referred again to their conversation of the afternoon, closing it with a few inconsequent remarks. At last Helen roused herself. She stooped over Alex, letting her arms rest about his shoulders.

"You have had no tea, I am sure, dear," she said, and quietly she passed from the room into her small kitchen, where she found Jane already busy arranging a tray. This, as soon as the tea was made, Helen took into her own hands and carried to Galbraith and Tompson. The tray contained only a plate of brown, buttered toast, a dish of cold meat with mustard, and an abundant pot of as good, well-made tea as ever refreshed a thirsty Englishman. These simple suppers served by Helen were very delightful to Tompson. What he got on these occasions was in striking contrast to the things furnished at the Club, but for this very reason he enjoyed them the more.

The three sat, for the most part silent, while eating, as people do when the atmosphere is overcharged with an unexpressed sense of depression. Helen seemed to revive a little after taking two cups of tea, but her voice and manner remained unnatural. When the modest supper came to an end, Tompson took his departure, both puzzled and anxious, resolving to find out, if possible, what Helen had been up to in the city. If any outsider, he reflected, was to take a hand in her affairs, he

unquestionably was the man to do so, both by right of his long and intimate friendship with Galbraith, and by that higher right which his love for Helen gave him. Tompson knew full well how Helen loved Galbraith, and up to this time he had always respected her love and her position. Next to Galbraith, however, he was determined to stand; and whoever else should aspire to that place would have to contest it with him. By the time he reached the railway station these thoughts had become very clearly defined in his mind, and because he was a man who made no confidences, but lived shut in by his own quiet reserve, they were much more likely to become thoughts fraught with a dangerous power of execution, should the necessity for action ever arise. Thus it came about that without any real intention of malice, influenced solely by the dictates of his selfish love, Tompson, utterly unconscious of overstepping the proprieties of true genltemanly conduct, set himself the task, if not of watching Helen Galbraith, at least, of informing himself, without her consent, about her personal matters. Unjustifiable as such a course is, it need not have been a necessarily dangerous one to pursue, except for the fact that Tompson had allowed himself to become so deeply interested in Helen that he had, at times, even permitted himself to speculate upon the consequences of Alex's death. However, it must be admitted, at such times he had always called himself up with a halt, never allowing his imagination to run away with his common-sense.

len! Loving, devoted, pure-hearted girl,

standing face to face with the inevitable and striving through sacrifice of self to fight it back and gain a little longer breathing-space—what is one to say of her? Only this, can I say, who knew her well and understood her motives, that she, poor child is forgiven in advance, whatever she may do; forgiven as I am sure the Recording Angel must forgive, who, in writing down our transgressions, cannot in justice, nor in mercy either, fail to write over against them the love, the sorrow, the aspiration still strong in a breaking heart at the very moment when the blackest sin closes over it. Contradictory, of course, this seems, but who that knows life, who that has ever made a desperate fight against terrible odds for his own soul, can gainsay me the truth of it?

While Andrew Tompson was taking his way to the railway station, Helen, with her face buried on Alex's breast, sat weeping bitterly. The strain of the afternoon was now asserting itself, and no longer able to control her emotions, she sobbed and panted as does a child, who, having been lost from home and mother, and retaining its courage until re-found, then bursts forth into an agony of distress. Alex understood Helen, comprehended all her moods. He only rested his head now upon her own, frequently kissing her beautiful hair, asking her very few questions.

"You minded it very much, dear, did you not?" he ventured.

"Oh, very much!" she sobbed.

"My beautiful queen, to have to stoop to any one—and all for me!" he said. "But, darling," he added,

"it must be all right—it *must* be! You will tell me all about it to-morrow?" he asked gently.

"Yes, to-morrow—not now—not to-night!"

A certain fear, an undefined premonition of many things to come, swept through her at the recollection of Westmore and of his manner to her. She shrank from revealing this to Alex; it was the first thing affecting her deeply that she had ever kept from him. Late at night, when her tears had spent themselves, she fell asleep, troubled and restless, her arms clasped tightly about Alex's neck. In her dreams she called his name frequently, and clung to him, as if for protection; and no woman, tossing in a disturbed sleep, was ever guarded by a greater and a tenderer love than that which watched that night over her.

CHAPTER IV.

HELEN could not bring herself to enter into details concerning her visit to Mr. Westmore, nor to describe to Alex the feelings which that visit had aroused in her. Had she done so, she was aware that she would have entirely defeated her own purpose in asking Mr. Westmore's help, for Alex, already prejudiced against the man, would in that case, she knew, have scorned his proffered aid. Yet could she pause here and refuse the help held out to her, as she felt sure Alex would have had her do, had he been in full possession of the facts? Yes, she could have paused, and allowed Alex and herself to sink into the direst poverty; resulting, she seemed to foresee, in death for him, possibly miserable and alone in a charity hospital, while she, helpless to avert such a fate, could only stand by and watch events take their determined course. To Helen, therefore, there appeared to be no choice in the matter. She could not think of pausing; to give herself freely and generously to whatever lay before her became her supreme purpose. Further than this, now, she determined not to think nor conjecture.

In this condition of affairs a week passed—outwardly an uneventful week for Helen, and yet one marking many stages in her individual development. In that week her love for Galbraith gathered, if

possible, a new force unto itself. She clung to him with a tenderness and compassion painful to see, so evident was it that she apprehended some influence which might in the future bear her away from him.

At times the thought came to her overpoweringly that she was about to sell herself into the hands of a hard and unscrupulous master. Such thoughts filled her soul with desperation, still she was determined not to yield to them. The only means of escape from doubt of herself lay in devoting all of her time and attention to Galbraith, and this she did, as she had never done before. To do this was to live under an intense nervous strain, but for the time being it quickened the action of Helen's mind, causing it to blossom forth in a multitude of new ideas, which often burst forth into eager, impassioned words, equally surprising and delightful to Galbraith. Interesting and lovable as she had always been to him, he now saw that in many things she had advanced ; had outgrown the measure which once fitted her ; some new influence had incited to a stronger and fuller life all that lay within her rich nature. He saw this with pleasure, but he saw also, and with pain, that the great sadness, the ready comprehension of, and warm sympathy with suffering which life with him had so developed in her—these things he saw were becoming more intense and real for her, as her mind and heart became more alive to other things. As they sat together in the evenings, their talk often touched upon the great masterpieces in literature and art—those especially wherein the moral life was the subject of most moment. Galbraith could not but

notice how direct and vital were the questions which Helen asked concerning moral issues—and also how intense and personal seemed to be her interest in all forms of sin and suffering. So ardent indeed at times did her emotions become, that Alex found himself fearing lest she might fail to keep herself in the right relation to matters of life.

"There is one simple thing we all have to do," he said to her one afternoon, as they sat together talking and watching the sun fall away to the west, leaving the broad Jersey meadows in shadow. "We must strive to keep our theory of life rational. There is a certain ideal which alone is the true one—this we must preserve at any cost. In its stead we must never allow mere enthusiasm to set up false images."

"Yes, I know," she replied. "It is an immense thing to be anchored like that—but feeling is very great—at times it controls everything."

"Did I ever tell you, dear," he continued, "my story of the old Paris sculptor, who saved his statue at the cost of his life? He was a famous sculptor, this old man, and his great work, for which he gave his life, stands to-day in the Beaux Arts. He was very poor, as most of his brethren have been, and he lived in Paris in a small garret. This garret was his workshop, his studio, and his bedroom. The great statue, which stands now in the Beaux Arts, was almost finished in clay, when one night a sudden frost fell over Paris. The old sculptor lay in his bed, with the statue before him in the center of the fireless room. As the chill of the night became great, he saw that if the cold got more intense, the water in the interstices of clay would freeze, so he

rose and heaped his few bedclothes upon the statue. In the morning when his friends came in, they found him dead—but his great work was there, saved—whole! He himself was gone, but the ideal for which he had lived had been preserved."

Finally, near the end of the week, there came a courteous letter from the editor-in-chief of Mr. Westmore's paper, requesting Helen to call at his office on the following day. This was something definite and Helen hailed it with delight. For a second time Alex was left to spend the afternoon alone, while Helen took her way anxiously into New York. There is something naturally thrilling to any young woman in being summoned for consultation to an editorial office, even if she is aware of the fact that the kindly intervention of an influential friend has brought about the desired interview. Helen was conscious of a certain sense of elation and excitement as she climbed the long, winding stairway leading to the place of her appointment. The building in which were located the offices of Mr. Westmore's editorial friend was not one of those new, "advanced," up-to-date establishments, in the possession of which New York is so rapidly surpassing the civilized world. This building was old, and time-worn, and, as the editor-in-chief might have told you, one of historic associations. Certainly in the years gone by many a state paper had been assisted on its way by the men who sat supreme in these editorial rooms, and who, by their clearness of vision, their ripened wisdom, their courage and executive force had laid the foundation of the best form of newspaper work this country has ever en-

joyed. A certain dignity attached to the old structure, shabby and worn as were its halls and stairways, and upon entering the outer office Helen perceived immediately that the men at work there were all of gentlemanly appearance and courteous manner. It was an agreeable surprise to her; she had conceived the idea that the modern newspaper office is a place of the most hopeless hurry and confusion—where intruders from the outside world should expect to meet any fate which folly so great as theirs might naturally bring upon them. Helen had not long to wait; her interest in what was going on about her was just commenced to be aroused when she was informed that her turn had come, and rising, she passed into that inner room, for entrance to which many hearts equally as worthy as hers had sighed in vain.

This editorial sanctum was a large room, into which the air and light could pass freely through the several windows opening upon it; while orderly, it was in no sense luxurious, but evidently a place for work, with a bare floor—except for a rug or two—several desks, a few comfortable chairs, and a spacious writing-table literally strewn with manuscripts. Before this table sat Mr. Sherman Elliott, editor-in-chief, a man, it was said, who carried more individual force and influence into the execution of his work, than any other editor in New York city. To a certain extent Mr. Elliott had to refer all important matters to Mr. Westmore who, with his fortune, was necessarily the backbone of the great paper. Westmore, however, was a man of unlimited worldly wisdom, and while it was a matter

of infinite pride with him that he was able to maintain and, in a measure, control so important a factor in the life of the great city as an old-established and trusted journal, he realized as intelligently as did his aid, Mr. Elliott, or as did any of his opponents in either the financial or the editorial world, that he was fitted only to direct the business policy of the paper. All matters political, religious, or social, he wisely left to men of broader culture and wider experience than his own. It was often said by those who understood his character, that while there were a great many things even in the line of business which Mr. Westmore could not do himself, there was no man in New York who could equal him in his choice of men to do well just the thing he himself could not do. In nothing had he ever so illustrated the truth of this assertion as in his selection of Mr. Sherman Elliott to be editor-in-chief of his great paper. Mr. Elliott was a typical New England man of the best class, who had come years before to New York, and having thoroughly identified himself with the life of the city, had risen in his profession until no man could surpass, or perhaps equal him in editorial work. He brought to the management of his paper the same coolness, the same supreme self-control, which Westmore brought to the manipulation of the money market; but he brought much more than this: a liberal culture; a ready wealth of learning concerning men and affairs, governments and institutions, countries and civilizations; beside a great store of wisdom born of close observation and wide personal experiences. To these things he united a true spirit of human-

itarianism, which, while making him the better man and the better editor, had prevented him from becoming a man of wealth.

In regard to the management of their paper, Mr. Westmore seldom made a point of anything with Mr. Elliott; having always found him ready to act upon any suggestion from himself, provided, after considering it, he felt convinced that its adoption would be for the good and the advancement of the paper. In a few cases, when a personal interest had urged him to do so, Westmore had broken through this rule; even then he encountered difficulty in carrying his point, though he backed the paper with unlimited credit. Mr. Elliott, without insisting, demanded by his very nature an unreserved confidence from Westmore; he expected to be trusted thoroughly, and Westmore was forced to render this confidence which was looked for at his hands. He had anticipated something of a fight with Mr. Elliott in regard to the work promised to Helen, but he had quite made up his mind that this time he would make a demand which nothing could induce him to withdraw. Just what work Helen was to do he could not undertake to determine; Elliott should decide all that; but that she was to do something in connection with the paper, and that he was not to be questioned as to his reasons, on this he was fully and irrevocably resolved. As good fortune would have it, the matter settled itself without any kind of controversy. There might be made a place upon the paper, Mr. Elliott thought, for an intelligent woman who knew something of art and literature. He was not greatly in favor of increasing his woman

force, but so long as this particular woman was willing to do her work at home, and yet submit to his decisions, he would try the arrangement. Mr. Westmore had told him that she and her husband were friends of his, in urgently needy circumstances, who could only be helped in some way like this, and it was really Mr. Elliott's humanitarianism which caused the battle to be so easily won. But he insisted upon one point—a personal interview with Mrs. Galbraith.

"Special work, you know, Westmore," he said, "is often accepted from people unknown to us; but when it comes to a regular, permanent association and authorized representative, I prefer, if possible, to meet that person and to take his or her measure as an individual; otherwise I am trusting largely to chance, and, you know, I never do that." Westmore demurred a little—he wished to arrange the whole matter himself, but Mr. Elliott pressed his point, insisting that no sensible objection could be raised against it, and so it came about that Helen stood in Mr. Elliott's presence.

Very quietly and gravely she entered the room. At sight of her Mr. Elliott forgot his usual manner, and arose, coming forward a step or two to greet her. Her extreme beauty and grace almost startled him, as she exchanged greetings with him. If he was struck by Helen's appearance, she was none the less impressed by his.

"What a companion," was her immediate thought, "in physical strength, in intellectual expression of face, and in manly bearing for Alex, had it not been for that terrible accident!"

Mr. Sherman Elliott was six feet two in height, of perfect proportions, carrying a hundred and eighty pounds with the most easy grace on his well-developed, strongly-knit limbs. His face and head might be called massive, yet so completely did they suit his magnificent body, that no part of him seemed out of harmony with the other. He was a direct contrast to Alexander Galbraith in point of coloring, being of the purest Saxon type. His countenance was similar to Alex's, in that no beard disfigured it, and his strong, decisive New England features showed at once the true character of the man.

Taking Helen's hand, he said with dignity and kindness of tone.

"Mrs. Galbraith! I am glad to see you here. Do be seated."

Helen sat down in the nearest chair, while Mr. Elliott returned to his writing-table.

"It was extremely good of you to ask me to come. I feel the value of an editor's time, I assure you," she replied. He liked her simple, natural speech.

"We editors are not quite the formidable creatures we are often represented to be," said he, a grave, attractive smile spreading itself over his face. "We really do have some time to spare. But beset as we are by all sorts of men, we are excusable, I believe, for reserving for ourselves the privilege of being choice about whom we see." Helen at once felt that her presence there was acceptable.

"And now, Mrs. Galbraith," continued Mr. Elliott, "I infer that you understand why I sent for you. The success of any newspaper arrange-

ment must depend largely upon the character of the man or woman engaged in the work. Possibly there is no profession in which the personal endowments of the workers count for so much as in ours. So it was natural that I should wish to meet you and to talk with you of some things of vital interest to me in connection with my work. You do not object, I trust?"

"Indeed I do not!" replied Helen with earnestness. "I shall be glad to hear what you have to say, that I may carry out, if possible, your ideas."

"You may have observed," continued Mr. Elliott, resting his arm upon his table, his brow placed thoughtfully against the palm of his hand, "that we are not conducting a strictly up-to-date newspaper. We leave that to some of our neighbors, and to the many others who have adopted the modern newspaper methods so popular at present in America. I do not mean to criticise any one. Every man is entitled to do his own work according to his own best conception of that work. Simply, I do not accept for myself or for my staff the policy pursued by most of my brother editors. You may have noticed this. I presume you see our paper."

"Yes, I see it often," Helen replied, "and the difference in its tone—its superiority, if you will permit me to use so positive an expression—has impressed both my husband and myself most forcibly."

"I suppose I may infer from what you say that you quite agree with my position," said Mr. Elliott. "Yet I assure you, Mrs. Galbraith, I get a great deal more abuse than sympathy from my fellow-

workers. And then I find it extremely difficult to procure men and women to carry on our work sufficiently equipped in practical matters, who are at the same time strong enough to ignore the clamor raised by popular leaders, to join in with the chosen few who strive to purify the public taste, and to create, if possible, in the public heart a desire for plain, simple truths. Such an aim sounds easy enough of accomplishment: the road leading to it would seem to be so direct; but I can assure you I have found it the straight and narrow way—a thorny path indeed—in which few walk any distance without losing heart."

"From what you say I should conclude that the higher aim of the artist for simple, direct truth is very like your own, and your fight is carried on in much the same manner that his must be."

"Ah, you understand, I see! You have thought of these things, Mrs. Galbraith!" Mr. Elliott lifted his head and looked at her in frank confidence.

"I have learned something of them from my husband—from his life, and from his failures," she replied with a sadness of tone that touched deeply this strong, fervent-natured man.

"We have come," he went on, fully alive now to the interests of the subject which he had opened, "into an age of cheap, quick work, where the eye does not cast itself beyond the results of to-day. It is useless to deny this condition of things. It is the same in all the departments of labor—gigantic, quick effects that surprise and dazzle, these are what are demanded on every hand; and the typical Ameri-

can paper is, without doubt, the special exponent of this degenerate tendency. No one is in a better position to know this than am I." For a moment Mr. Elliot paused, but seeing that Helen maintained a listening attitude, he continued:

"Instead of aiming to create a purer taste, to raise the standard of everyday thought and everyday living, this typical newspaper of which I speak seems to be inspired by but one idea, and that is to come down to the level of the most ordinary man, to pander to his weaknesses, even, in many instances, to foster in him greater ones than those he already possesses. This, without doubt, is discouraging in the extreme to those who are in the thick of the fight, and who see the battle going against them at nearly every turn." Mr. Elliot's face deepened into an expression of anxious concern as he spoke these words. As Helen watched him she thought of the story her husband had told her of the poor dying sculptor.

"The difficulties are great, I can see," she said, "but for that one need not yield. One has always the privilege of holding on to his ideal, even if he is swept away in making the effort."

"That is true—gloriously true," replied Mr. Elliott with enthusiasm. Such words as these from that beautiful, queenlike woman stirred his strongest emotions.

"It is my constant thought," he continued, "always my strong determination—not to yield. To my dying day, if I remain at this post, I am resolved to conduct this paper only as a clean, pure, dignified organ, representative of the best and high-

est interests of a truth-loving people, never succumbing to the intense craving on the part of the public for purely sensational food. It is absurd to contend, as many editors do, that we have not the power to control the public mind. Watch, for instance, the influence of any one great man in a community; take one act of heroism and seek out the results of it in other lives. Such examples as these confute utterly the constant cry of the popular editor, that the public wants only certain things, and that, if he is to live, he must gratify these demands."

Mr. Elliott spoke with a great deal of warmth—he was now touching on those things of vital interest to him, which he had mentioned to Helen. Going on with his subject, he said further:

"As a mere business fact it is not true—the claims of these editors, I mean. Look at our own paper. It is unquestionably a splendid investment; it has steadily increased in value as a mere money-making institution, and should Mr. Westmore withdraw his capital from it to-morrow, there would be a dozen of the most substantially moneyed men of New York eager to put their millions into it."

"You certainly seem to have established practically the truth of your own theory," replied Helen.

"Yes, but now that we have established it, we must be strong enough to stand by it. We must not be like the man of great cleverness and little wisdom, who creates a vast fortune to-day, only to squander it to-morrow."

"I do not believe you could do anything so foolish," replied Helen, entirely unconscious of the

personal effect which her remark made. These few words, spoken with earnestness and simplicity, in which her sympathy for him was distinctly apparent, reached and touched Mr. Elliott much more at that time than any long talk about herself could have done. Westmore in speaking of her had simply said that she was young and handsome, and so she had burst upon Mr. Elliott as a sunbeam bursts forth from a cloudy sky. Looking at her now, he felt, as if he had been brought suddenly into the presence of a perfect work of art. Something very fine—something different from the ordinary type of womanhood had sought expression, he was sure, through this exquisite human being. Such a woman, Mr. Elliott reflected, must undoubtedly possess native artistic endowments, must have a soul attuned to beautiful things, and so he permitted himself to feel hopeful concerning the work he was about to commit into her hands. Taking up the conversation again he continued:

"And now, Mrs. Galbraith, having said so much for our general policy, let us look a few minutes at what, for instance, we shall expect of you." A very satisfactory talk ensued; a talk into which each one threw a good deal of individual experience and no small amount of hearty, earnest thought and feeling.

The strong manhood of Mr. Elliott inspired in Helen a warm admiration for him, besides fixing her confidence in the integrity of his character. It was surprising to her when she thought of it afterwards, how unreservedly she spoke of intimate, personal things during this conversation, expressing

the best that was in her more adequately perhaps than she had ever before been able to express it to anyone, except to Galbraith. The true story of her life, the silent sorrow of her soul came out then in a few earnest, intense sentences in a way that touched and moved Mr. Elliott deeply. In the end it was so arranged that Helen should undertake regular work for the paper, the special character of the work to be decided upon by them as the occasion required, though it was at all times to be confined to matters purely literary and artistic, the only two subjects upon which Helen felt herself capable of any kind of expression.

"Only one word more, Mrs. Galbraith," added Mr. Elliott in conclusion, "you will readily see from what I have said that we do not attempt to destroy the baneful influence of the immoral in literature or the inglorious in art by airing it extensively in our columns. Silence, we think, in most of these cases, is quite as effectual, quite as apt to carry through our purpose, as ardent condemnation would be. We are content to take up only certain vital questions in literature and art, believing that they serve our ends quite well enough. Of course," he added with a smile, "if you can do work in the line of creative criticism, we are not averse to that; but that is an art calling for so high an order of talent that we look for it from no less than a master. We do want, however, positive writing when we can get it—and not writing of the negative kind. Remember this in regard to your individual work, and remember also our policy as a paper, that we cannot afford to squander our strength upon immaterial,

inconsequent issues. If we can continue to fight truly and to fight strongly along the main lines, that is all we can expect to accomplish."

With this manly, simple purpose reverberating in her ears, Helen finally took her leave, feeling, as she passed out of the dignified old editorial rooms into the busy, crowded street below, that a new and powerful influence had entered her life, awakening to activity every eager and ardent aspiration of her own earnest, warm nature.

"Why cannot all men be like that—and like Alex?" she asked herself, as she walked on in the Indian Summer sun, which was now filling the street with its mellow, mystical light. A great throng of people, eager over the final interests of the day, pressed her on all sides; the newsboys rushed by, calling in shrill tones the special editions; the din, the haste, the commotion of busy New York was all about her, but she was scarcely conscious of it, except as one is conscious of the stage-setting when an exciting drama is being enacted in his presence. Thrown face to face with such compelling influences did Helen feel herself to be now, that she could with difficulty think clearly. Scene followed scene taken from the cruel pages of her own life: her mind seemed to be a confused, disordered mass of wild, rushing thoughts, of mad possibilities—all beyond her reach, all evading the hold she would lay upon them. Whither was the current bearing her—whither was she drifting—toward good or evil? Could not some one endowed with the power of divination tell her, and relieve the tension of her brain? Was life to become for her

so tangled a web that she was never again to be free—never again able to surrender her soul unreservedly to her own higher impulses? How stirred and wrought upon she was by the genuine goodness, the earnest aims of Sherman Elliott! yet how against it all, in dark, foreboding contrast for her, did the character and life of Mr. Westmore appear! As this cloud swept over her vision, wild, uncontrolled tears sprang to her eyes. She groped on, scarcely knowing which way she turned, or conscious of the hurrying, eager life all about her. Her own suffering, her own doubts, she alone saw and felt. When she came to herself she perceived that there alone in the crowded, busy street she was trembling and weeping like a child. She stood near a flower-stall, over which a young Italian woman, who held a baby in her arms, presided. Helen instinctively buried her face in one of the great bunches of roses, inhaling with deep, long-drawn breaths their refreshing sweetness. This gave her time to stay her tears, and somewhat to recover herself. The little Italian mother came forward, still clasping her baby in her arms. She held up first one bunch of flowers and then another, naming their price, hoping to induce Helen to purchase. The child had the exquisitely rich, southern coloring of Italian children, that color the old masters knew so well how to reproduce in their Holy Families. Helen had not for a long time seen such a warm, radiant type of babyhood as this. Swayed only by the emotion which possessed her, Helen stooped and kissed the child, letting her hand rest caressingly upon its soft, chubby cheek. The mother's face

broke into a proud, glad smile. She held the baby up so that Helen might observe it to better advantage. For a few minutes Helen lingered over it, then, purchasing a bunch of chrysanthemums for Alex, she turned from the flower-stall and the happy Italian mother and walked on toward the ferry.

She soon discovered that she was much more fatigued than she had been aware of, and it was with a sense of physical gratitude that she joined the great throng pressing eagerly for places in the boat, which, in a few minutes, was to make the trip across to the Jersey side. Almost overcome now by her weariness and excitement, she felt that she was unable to endure the close atmosphere of the cabin, so making her way through the crowd of passengers, she passed out upon the forward deck, where she always delighted to be, facing the wind and the waves. What a thing it was to be free! Free as a bird is free to flee away, far out into the vast natural world, across the ocean, beyond the mountain, far away to some sweet, green land, where rest and peace and happiness abide! If it could only be!

A hand from behind touched her on the arm, and turning, she confronted Mr. Westmore. At sight of him her dreams quickly fled. His presence there filled her with indignation; but she was able so to control herself that he did not at once perceive her feeling. The formal greeting which she gave him made him aware, however, of her disapproval of this act of his; but so insignificant a matter as this was not calculated to baffle Mr. Westmore. He quietly accepted Helen's silence, and when the boat reached Jersey City and the crowd started forward on its

usual rush for the gang-board, he laid his hand upon her arm and, without a word, guided her course as she left the boat. But soon, as she stood out upon the wharf, no longer pressed upon by hurrying men and women, she shook herself free of his hand, and strode on, still silent and disregarding his presence. She knew instinctively that he had planned this meeting, that he had known of her engagement with Mr. Elliott, and that he had availed himself of this opportunity to follow her and force himself upon her, within the very hour that she had assumed her obligation to him. Her manner now gave to Mr. Westmore a very distinct idea of the extent of her indignation towards him. He was deeply chagrined at her treatment of him—yet he retained his outward composure and walked on undaunted by her side. Into the station together they went; but once there, no longer able to repress her resentment, Helen turned upon him.

"Why do you seek me *now?*" she asked, her tone indignant, and her proud head thrown back in righteous defiance.

"I saw you on the boat and only desired to speak with you," he replied, using the blandest of tones.

"You know that is not true, Mr. Westmore!" Helen exclaimed, moving back a step or two as she spoke, and defying him with her own dignity and honesty of thought.

"Then, if not that, *what?*" he asked in the coolest, most provoking manner possible. As he put this question, he stroked his heavy black mustache in the manner so characteristic of him.

"Why you followed me!" she replied, fairly

hurling her words at him, forgetting entirely that they stood in a public place.

"And if I did, are we not *friends*, Mrs. Galbraith?" He lingered over these words, scrutinizing her with the keenest gaze as he uttered them.

For a moment her eyes closed. She bowed her beautiful proud head. Yes, they were friends, these two! He knew the most intimate things of her life—she herself had told him; and he had assisted her to what she desired—had reached out a helping hand to her in her time of direst need—and she had accepted it—had taken it for her support. Truly, she had no right to scorn him, to hate him as she was beginning to do. She might dislike his manner, might disdain his attitude toward her, yet she should show her appreciation of his deed, should convey to him her consciousness of the obligation which rested upon her. In a modified voice she said:

"Then, if we *are* friends, you should not follow me and watch me, as I feel you have done this afternoon."

"I have not followed you. I have not watched you, Mrs. Galbraith," replied Mr. Westmore in the gravest tone. "I was coming this way—I saw you—I spoke to you, because, if I may say it, I like always, when I can, to be in your presence."

Then he touched his hat and was gone before she could reply.

She knew that he had lied to her, but she had no alternative but to receive his statement with apparent consent and let the matter rest there. How she wished that she could have pushed her protest further, and held him to the lie, which she knew he

had told her. She was powerless, or felt herself to be so. She was out of joint with the world and with herself, and her dislike for Westmore, she felt, was assuming startling proportions. Soon her train was called and she passed on to it. After a little the thought of Sherman Elliott came back to her; and, turning her eyes upon the broad Jersey meadows through which her course lay, she felt the spirit of peace creep into her heart, and the influence of a strong, good man went with her to her simple cottage home.

Another person besides Mr. Westmore had been observing Helen that afternoon. Just as she passed through the gate to her train, Andrew Tompson turned abruptly away from a near point of observation and twirling his cane nervously, as was his habit, started back to New York with the determination of drinking a bottle of wine over what he had just witnessed, and of seeing then what his sharpened wits might do in this matter.

CHAPTER V.

THE period immediately following Helen's arrangement with Mr. Elliott passed very quietly for the Galbraiths. The venture which they had engaged in drew them still more closely together, and these first weeks of its undertaking were spent by Helen and Alex in that holy, intimate relation, which can exist between two lives only when the spiritual being of each is absolutely in harmony with that of the other. Living as Galbraith did in a perpetual nearness to suffering, liable at any moment to acute physical or mental pain, all that delicacy of feeling, all that fineness of sense which had given him his supreme conception of the artist's vocation, seemed now to deepen and intensify the fervor of his soul. Helen saw with the passage of each day, how he was more easily moved for others—more filled with an intense human sympathy. Nor could his state of health fail to increase the habitual seriousness of thought, the tendency to look at the inner life of things, which had always been so distinctive a quality of his noble, strong nature. An abiding, deep, yet gentle sadness took possession of his spirit, and filled it with a yearning for the things that are not of this life. It was under such conditions that Helen lived in the closest union with her husband.

The work which she had engaged to do was virtually a continuation of what she and Alex had already

aimed at doing; thus it was not so difficult to adjust herself to its demands. The two really did the work between them. Galbraith's wide experience and careful artistic training gave him a good deal to draw upon. He was rich in resources, which Helen had the good taste to utilize in a pleasant, acceptable manner. To a certain extent she was to be directed in her work, as Mr. Elliott had said, by him, but that wise man soon saw that, regarding subjects of art, it would be better to let her work very nearly as a free lance. Subject to only a few limitations then, she and Galbraith, after looking the field carefully over, concluded to make trial of an article on *The Art Schools of Paris;* a very safe subject, they thought, and one thoroughly within the grasp of all ordinarily intelligent readers. Nothing was attempted in this article beyond a pleasant, almost conversational style of writing. It started with a short, interesting account of the position held in those Schools by the American students, whose high reputation among the Parisian professors not only for talent, but for industry and perseverance, Galbraith felt sure was scarcely understood at home. This introduction led easily to a brief account of some of the famous French teachers of art, men seldom equaled anywhere in the world for conscientious, patient work. After this a little serious talk was thrown in on the subject of the great severity exercised in late years in regard to admission to the Beaux Arts. Years before, when Galbraith was first a student in Paris, the applicant for admission who presented himself to one of the chief professors, armed with a certain number of draw-

ings as examples of his work, and expressing his desire to become a pupil, was seldom refused. Now all that is changed. The student to-day is not only compelled to give proof of artistic capacity to gain admission to the Beaux Arts, but he must pass an examination as to his knowledge of the French language, of anatomy, of perspective and history. Galbraith believed in knowledge, the wider the better; but he claimed that the knowledge which enters into and makes great work is that which comes from experience and gradual development rather than from certain exact studies acquired in youth. By way of lightening up the article and making a pleasant finish, the question of selecting and engaging models was discussed. It was somewhat in this way that Helen and Alex did their work; the latter furnishing the facts, the former giving an agreeable form to them.

Galbraith had so weakened physically during the past few months that only by making a great effort was he able to cast his thought and imagination back into the past, and recall vividly the experiences and impressions of that time. The effort once made and the work done—done in a manner which they both realized as likely to prove satisfactory—Galbraith seemed to a certain extent revived and refreshed. This naturally brought new hope to Helen's heart, and inspired her with an energy which revealed hitherto undreamed-of possibilities in her own nature. In the second week when, as arranged by Mr. Elliott, Helen turned to another side of her work, she found herself entering into it with a real and personal interest, which made its accomplish-

ment much simpler and more enjoyable. There was a certain relationship between the two kinds of work which made it easy to pass from the one to the other—from art subjects to the subject of books.

In the long conversation which Mr. Elliott had with Helen, regarding the matter, he had made so plain to her his own ideas about what he wanted, that she was able to turn to the book, whatever it might be, which had been sent her for review, with a very clear and definite purpose regarding it in her mind. This was especially easy to do, as Mr. Elliott's plan of literary work agreed entirely with all of Galbraith's conceived ideas of the true purposes of art. With a good deal of zest Galbraith took up the work with Helen, and their first review-book was read so carefully and so discriminatingly, that the poor, absent, unknown author would, no doubt, have cried, "Mercy!" had he known what a severe search-light was being turned upon his maiden effort. The result was that a few days later a review reached Mr. Elliott which must have proved perfectly satisfactory, for he published it without changing a single word!

It was Saturday afternoon, and Helen permitted herself a breathing-spell. Alex sat, according to his custom, at the west window, from which position he could not only observe the wide, sweeping landscape, but he could also see Helen, who was taking her walk to and fro along a deserted old roadway that ran to the left of the cottage. Helen walked here frequently in the afternoons, while

Alex was keeping his vigil with nature; and the spot was one in which she genuinely delighted. It reminded her of some beautiful avenue in a monk's garden; it was a picturesque and inviting place in which to walk, quite unlike anything else in that wide, open country where meadows below made the main feature of the landscape. Locust trees, clothed at this season of the year in dead leaves, lined this roadway on either side; around them grew winding creepers, bronzed to the very tips and hanging in graceful festoons. In days gone by some one had placed several wooden seats beneath these trees, against others huge stones, now lichen-covered, had been rolled, to be used also as seats. Helen loved the place; she could walk there for hours undisturbed by passers-by, yet always within sight of Galbraith, within sound of his voice. Often she would turn in her walk and going back to the window, would place a wild flower or a green, sweet spray of some kind on its sill for Alex, then returning, take up her tramp again.

On this afternoon, at the end of her two weeks of trial work, Helen took her walk up and down the old roadway with an unusual degree of pleasure and energy; she struck into a steady stride, turning every now and then to wave her hand to Alex. She was in just the mood for exercise—she wanted to stretch her limbs, to feel the freedom that goes with out-door things—and to breathe in the soft autumn air. The scene, too, on which she looked, toned in with her mood. It was an enticing day in the first week of November, cool and stimulating, with plenty of color in every direction. The ave-

nue between the locust trees seemed to her like a holy retreat. A sense of rest, rest of mind, possessed her. She had put into her work of the past two weeks her best effort, and she was satisfied with herself for having been able to do so much. As a result a feeling of strength and security had come to her; yet her spirit, she knew, was not in reality calm. She needed to learn a greater lesson than she had yet learned—*to be quiet and wait.* This was what she knew she ought to strive for, yet of late she had found it very difficult to make this fight. "*To be spiritually minded is life and peace.*" Something brought these words into her mind. Yes, that must be the solution she was seeking, the only way to keep life clearly along the safe and beaten track. Had it been, she asked herself, that in her extreme love for Galbraith she had thought too much of the practical matters of life, of the material needs of existence? Possibly, after all, she might have found another way; Mr. Westmore's personal intercession might not have been a necessary factor in the game, had she only known what manner of man Mr. Elliott was. And yet how could she have known? Even in her most imaginative moments it would have been hard for her to conceive the idea of such a man as Mr. Elliott appeared to be. Whom had she ever seen like him—a man surrounded by the most absorbing practical affairs, yet so strong, so sufficient in the midst of them, so resolved only upon the best and highest aims? Such a man represented the most effective spiritual-mindedness which "is life and peace." Surely she could have spoken to him on her own behalf at their

first acquaintance, could have told him everything; nor did she doubt that he would then have made a contract with her on a purely business basis. What a relief this would have been to her. The more she thought of it, the more she hated the personal element which had brought about her relationship with him, which was the result purely of Mr. Westmore's influence, and now she knew, beyond a peradventure, that Mr. Westmore, by what he had done in her behalf, had gained an undeniable claim upon her. With this consciousness in her mind it was very hard to obtain the calm and quiet spirit, the peace for which she longed. Still, she resolved to strive earnestly for it, trusting to find it, perchance in some way she could not now foresee. For the present she would deliver her mind from all thought of these things! This afternoon should be hers—hers to delight in—hers to walk forth freely in—hers in which to use in a satisfying sense her physical and mental life which signified so aptly genuine freshness and vigor.

A belated cardinal flew into a locust tree above Helen's head. He gave a swift, sweet call, but finding no response, flew quickly away. Helen paused in her walk to notice the bird's actions. What a brilliant thing he was, all alone there, and how his unanswered call had gone to her heart! Tears came to her eyes, for the soaring bird, a solitary figure seeking happiness elsewhere, seemed to represent her own life—a thing apart, separate from that of others, left alone to find a way through this great, perplexing world of human experience. But no! She turned and wiped her tears away; for

there at the window within sound of her own voice was Alex, the anchor, the safeguard of her soul; that solitary, belated cardinal a-wing after companionship and happiness, *could not be* typical of her life! Yet the memory of the bird remained, and for all her reasoning there seemed to be something personal in the appeal he had made to her heart.

Helen continued her walk up the slope toward the wood beyond, but she did not go very far; she wished to keep nearer the cottage, within sight of Alex. Turning back she perceived a man approaching her; he came along eagerly and soon stood beside her. It was Andrew Tompson, looking very correct and immaculate, though a little breathless from his rapid walk across the fields. At some distance he had seen Helen and passing the cottage he came on to join her. She saw his intention and awaited his approach; the outline of her tall, slender figure, in the soft light, seemed to him as graceful as that of a beautiful, white lily. She gave him a subdued welcome. Helen had never been exactly genial with Tompson. While appreciating his attentions to Alex, she had never felt on secure ground with him. The truth was, she could not make Tompson out. She felt that he was either a much better man or a much worse one than he appeared to be. She disliked exceedingly the dilettantism of his life; contrasted with the strenuous fight which Alex had made and lost it seemed to her almost an offense against humanity itself. On account of Alex's friendship for him, she always aimed, however, to be just to him, though at times it sorely tried the sweetness of her nature to do so. But if

her manner towards Tompson lacked warmth, her beauty had always compensated for anything else that might be wanting in her. To-day he was especially impressed with her appearance; she looked etherealized beyond what was habitual with her; and, as she spoke, her voice vibrated to a strangely pathetic note. However, as she spoke she was not aware of appealing for sympathy to Tompson: he was the last person to whom she would naturally turn for such a thing. Yet at this time her whole being was so suffused with the sadness which enveloped her life, that unconsciously she did ask sympathy by the mere expression of her face and tone of her voice. Andrew Tompson was not a hard-hearted man, he was simply a self-centered one who always sought for himself the pleasant things of life and delighted in the sensations they brought. It was a charming sensation to take Helen's hand, subdued as her manner was, and to look upon her, the embodiment of womanly beauty and dignity. For a few minutes they stood together, she at least half a head above him in stature; then turning about she continued her walk, while he followed, making a strenuous effort to keep in step with her long, full stride.

It was fast getting to the close of day. The leafless locust trees were silhouetted against a rich mellow glow in the west. The seemingly limitless meadows below gave a vivid impression of immensity. Helen and Tompson had nearly reached in their walk the wooded land above; as they came to this high point, Helen stopped, looking eagerly around on all sides.

"It is beautiful now—beautiful in this sweet, soft sunlight, commonplace as it often seems in the glare of midday." Her words were spoken in an impersonal tone; they seemed addressed as much to the world about her, as to the man by her side. He was glad to have her break the silence, for he had begun to feel a little irritated by it. He wished, however, that she had addressed him more directly, so that he might reply to her along the line of his own thoughts. He felt inclined to resent so impassive an attitude on her part; he wished to force from her, if possible, some personal interest in what he had to say. His artistic sense was touched by this woman for whom, he no longer denied to himself, he cherished a passion. As he replied he looked steadily at Helen, trying to read in her eyes something more than the deep, abiding sadness, which he could not fail to see there.

"I often think," he said, "especially at a time like this, that the departing sun is like the poetry of life; it softens the vivid, high tones of the commonplace, and harmonizes things. It affects me like soft music—or like the presence of a gentle, beautiful woman," he added.

"It is, I suppose, the poetry of life," she replied; "a scene like this makes the soul conscious of itself and aspire only to beauty and goodness." A look of intense love came over her face as she said this, but the face was not turned toward Tompson; her vision directed itself beyond and rested upon the cottage window. Then she added:

"This is such a holy hour for Alex—the hour of sunset—that I like always, if possible, to be close

at hand. As much as I love being out-of-doors at this time, I would always sit there and listen to what he has to say, if he did not literally drive me forth into the fresh air."

"Alex is right; you house yourself far too much. Your splendid physical strength will give way under it." As Tompson spoke he drew very near to Helen, scanning her pale face with a look of genuine alarm. Did she realize what this man felt for her? No, not then, but the peculiar expression which his cynical, clear-cut face wore jarred upon her, as other things about him so often did. She could never, try as she might, bring herself into harmony with Tompson; something about the man always made her distrustful and impatient. She turned to him now, looking directly into his eyes and using as personal a tone as was possible for her:

"What would you have me do? Sacrifice Alex's happiness to my splendid physical strength, as you call it? You know well enough that the time is short." As she spoke, the sun, a resplendent ball of light, sank behind the woods, and disappeared. At that moment Tompson was conscious of a suppressed sigh mingling itself with the gloom that fell suddenly over the landscape; but the woman by his side held herself erect and aloof. Then for once he lost consciousness of self. Bending toward Helen, he laid his almost effeminate hand upon her arm. But his grasp was surprisingly strong, as it closed over her own firm flesh.

"Mrs. Galbraith! Helen! I know—the time *is* short—but you have a friend—remember! Next to Alex you must rely on me." It was entirely unlike

Tompson to speak in such broken words, to labor so in giving expression to his thought. This man of the world, thirty-eight years of age, was now swayed by the first great emotion that had ever possessed him. His grasp tightened upon Helen's arm, and a steadfast expression settled upon his cold, unsympathetic face. His compressed lips came very near touching the fair, white skin of Helen's temple. In a firm tone, such as a man uses when he is thoroughly conscious of the full meaning of his words and is willing to abide by them, he said, looking straight into her eyes :

"*Helen—I love you !* She tried to withdraw her arm, but he held it in his determined grasp.

"Please do not ! *Please !* I beg of you !" Helen's tone was personal enough now—personal in a way that would have controlled most men; it was a prayer for release and deliverance. Tompson did not heed it; he went on to the end he had appointed for himself.

"Give me the right to love you—that is all I ask. I will be faithful to the trust. I have been faithful to Alex, have I not ?" Absolute scorn was stamped upon her white face. For a moment he thought that the light in her eyes would strike him to the earth; save for her beauty, which rose now to the superb, she would have been dreadful to look upon, so great was her anger.

"Faithful !" she cried. "Faithful ! to utter the word at the very time you betray your best friend !" She broke away from him, but he caught her arm again, speaking very deliberately, seeing it was likely to be his last say upon this subject:

"I do not wish to make a scene, nor do I wish to be misunderstood. I do not withdraw what I have said—*I love you.* But I ask nothing of you now, except the right to love you, and that you should rely upon me. From some things I have learned of late, I fear that you have been turning for help and aid to other people, to those who may not prove so good masters in the end as I might. I only speak now to warn you, and, perhaps, to save you. Trust me! And in doing so, believe that your future is secure. This, Helen, is not much for a man to ask of a woman he loves." His hand still held her arm compellingly. He could feel her pulse beat quick and high, as he pressed his fingers into her trembling flesh. For a moment Andrew Tompson, self-possessed man of the world, who laughed sentiment to scorn, had gone literally mad with this white, throbbing arm in his grasp. He had spoken as he had never thought he would speak to any woman, but once having declared himself, having loosened the demon pent up in him, he felt a certain reckless disregard of her defiance. He was quite capable now of measuring his strength against hers.

Helen, unable to endure this torture, at last tore her arm away from Tompson's hold upon it, and fled to the rear entrance of the cottage. For a few minutes Tompson stood quite still under the locust trees. He needed to steady himself, to collect his thoughts, to find out what had happened to him. He was baffled; his supreme offer had been met by a quick and hearty scorn. This woman, Helen Galbraith, to whom, in her poverty and affliction, he had generously—so it seemed to him—offered his

love and help, had left him without a word of kindness or gratitude.

But it was a game at which two could easily play, and the one who had the most power of self-repression was likely to win in the end. He lingered yet a little while; the sweet odors that arise from the earth at nightfall crept over his senses. At last, with a certain quiet dignity of bearing, a thing he had assiduously cultivated in himself, Tompson turned to the cottage gate and entered it. The door stood ajar, and Galbraith, striding up and down the floor of the living room, called out to him with his usual earnest tone of greeting to come in. It was exactly what Tompson intended doing, and so in a perfectly natural manner, as if he had just come from the most pleasant interview with Helen, he entered, lighted his cigarette, and fell at once into familiar and light talk with Galbraith about the things in New York which interested them both.

In the meantime Helen, busying herself in the little kitchen, knew very well that Tompson would not depart until he had his talk with Alex and his usual cup of tea. She knew also that he understood very well she would not speak to Alex of what had occurred that afternoon between themselves; not for the world would she have disturbed that close friendship which existed between Galbraith and him.

Helen had no appetite that evening, but she poured the tea and sat by while Galbraith and Tompson drank it, munched their toast, and continued their talk. The warfare in which Tompson had lately engaged seemed to have given him an

unusual zest for food. Helen could not recall ever having seen him take his toast and tea with more apparent pleasure than now. Galbraith was influenced this evening by a sweet, gentle mood; he talked quietly, took frequent cups of tea from Helen's hand, and seemed quite content for the time with the pleasure these things brought him. Helen remained silent, scarcely listening to what the two men had to say. Presently she became conscious of a delicious fragrance which filled the room and which certainly she had not perceived when she left it, an hour or more before.

"What is it, this sweet odor?" she finally asked.

"Why, yes, dear," replied Galbraith, "I had quite forgotten. There by the door is a box—similar to the one which came last Saturday, with the same kind of roses in it, so Jane said. A boy left it while you were talking with Tompson under the locust trees."

"Flowers!" exclaimed Tompson, and turning he lifted the cover. "American Beauties too! and such splendid ones," he continued, holding the box so that Alex could look at its contents.

"What a handsome and sweet flower it is!" said Alex, pressing his nostrils against the large, luxurious blossoms. "But somehow," he added, "Helen does not seem to admire them as much as I do."

"I do admire them, dear," she said. "In themselves, they are the sweetest, most satisfactory things in the world; but I do not like anonymous gifts. That is my only objection in this case."

"I believe Tompson sends them," said Alex, looking at his friend in a questioning way. Tompson

cleared his throat and gave a quick, apprehensive look at Helen. She did not speak, her lips were closed tightly together, and her eyes met his not so much with defiance, as with a protest against anything he might do or say. She knew well enough that Tompson had not sent the flowers, and she felt that he knew as well as she did from whom they came. She recalled what he had said to her, less than an hour ago, about turning to others for advice and help; and she perceived distinctly now, from the look he gave her, that in some way he had informed himself concerning Mr. Westmore. Tompson, however, was discreet enough to assume an amused air as he replied evasively:

"It is not permitted a man, you know, to accuse himself." But the look he permitted himself to give Helen told her plainly that he understood the situation. Then placing his hand in his inner pocket, he held out a letter to Helen, saying:

"This reminds me, Mrs. Galbraith, of a letter which I got at the station for you and which I had quite forgotten until now." Helen could not prevent herself from reaching eagerly for the letter. He noted this with something like triumph expressed in his face. But the letter was not what either of them anticipated. To Helen it came as a pleasant surprise, being a kind word from Mr. Elliott, asking her to come on the following Monday to his office, and closing with commendation for her work.

When Tompson had left, Helen put aside her own feelings about Mr. Westmore's flowers, and arranged them on a table where Alex could easily enjoy their

beauty. Then turning and folding her arms about his neck, she said :

"Tell me, dear, do you really think well of Andrew Tompson, and does his friendship give you genuine pleasure?"

"Why, sweetheart mine, what a queer question after all these years!" he smiled as he spoke. "Of course I think well of him. We have been friends so long. Tompson was always interested in my career, and now that is over, his personal interest keeps my faith in friendship green. Why don't you like Andrew, dear? But, somehow, you never did," he added quickly.

"Well, somehow, I cannot exactly explain it, but he always gives me the impression of being a man who could play with other people's feelings much as he plays with art and literature. He has no really serious purpose, except to find for himself pleasant sensations and delight in them for the time being."

"Oh, he is really much better than that, I feel sure! You must remember, dear, that he has never had any deep, personal passion to develop in him a higher knowledge of what human relations can be."

"Do you believe, dear," she asked, "if a deep, personal passion should come to him, that it would make a broader man of him, a man more humanly comprehensive? For instance, you remember the words, to 'Discern infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn'—Do you think Andrew Tompson could ever learn to do this?"

"Why, yes, dear," Galbraith replied earnestly, "if he could only love some holy, God-given

woman like yourself : but in no other way could he learn."

"I do not feel, that he would learn even then," she said. "Something tells me love would make a smaller man yet of him ; possibly, under some conditions, a wicked man."

Galbraith could not reply. She closed his lips with her kisses, and folding her arms more tightly about him, sat for a long while, content to know that she could still hold him close to her heart. Certainly, with her there, encircling his poor, broken life with the power and glory of her love, Galbraith felt that one man in the universe fully understood the greatness of "infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn !"

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Helen went on the following Monday afternoon to Mr. Elliott's office, she found a message awaiting her to the effect that Mr. Elliott would not be down town this afternoon, but that he wished her to come to his home, in Gramercy Park, where she would find him. As this was not the engagement Helen had set out to keep, she winced for a moment at the change; but her good sense immediately asserted itself, and she started at once for Gramercy Park. There had always been something very attractive to Helen in this quiet, aristocratic old square, shut in by its dignified, unpretentious homes. To-day, being in a mood of mild receptivity, she found the repose of the place especially suggestive. All yesterday she had been hot and indignant at the memory of Andrew Tompson's conduct of Saturday afternoon; as the day passed this feeling, in large measure, subsided, and so well had she controlled herself, that Alex perceived nothing of her annoyance. There was much too, she felt distinctly, to encourage her. Though the cloud had not been lifted from her life, and though the new conditions seemed to portend some kind of evil, she yet could not fail to feel hope spring in her heart with the success which had attended her first effort at regular paid work; nor could she fail to see that Alex had caught somewhat the spirit of this same hope.

This, of course, meant that a certain vanished brightness had, in part, been restored to the intercourse of Alex and herself, making it more normal and simple. She had left Alex to-day with a smile upon his lips; in consequence, her own heart was lighter, more susceptible of pleasant impressions than she had of late felt it to be.

The Elliott house in Gramercy Park was externally like all the other houses there, of plain appearance; but when Helen was admitted to it and shown into the library on the first floor, she recognized at once that here was an ideal abode, one perfectly satisfying to the higher material senses. There had always been alive in Helen a certain hunger for the best things—the best things of thought, the best things of feeling, the best things in the art of living. To a large extent this craving had been inborn with her, but it had also been encouraged and fostered by her constant contact with Galbraith, who not only suffered from a perpetual hunger for such things himself, but who, spiritually, was so uncompromising, that he would greatly have preferred starvation to food less ideal than that his taste demanded. In Helen this taste concerned itself much more with the actual things of life than it had ever done in Galbraith's case. She delighted in beautiful houses, in sympathetic surroundings, in those material objects which add charm and suggestiveness to ahome. As Helen now sat waiting for some one to come down to her, she had the opportunity of observing that part of the Elliott house which could be easily seen from the library—the hallway on the left, and the drawing-room on the right of her.

Money in its modern uses had apparently had little to do with creating the atmosphere pervading these apartments, for little in them, except some of the books, seemed new, or in any way related to the fashion and ideas of the day. The impression which Helen obtained as she looked about her was one of complete harmony; the colors used were soft and acceptable to the eye, the furnishings were characterized by an old-time dignity and comfort. Distinctly this was a place to live and move in, a place neither barren nor overcrowded, as simple, substantial, and individual as the man who was master there. A large bowl of roses stood upon the library table, and from them and the surrounding rooms there seemed to come a delightful, unspeakable aroma, suggestive of other times and other places.

It was a long while since Helen had permitted herself the luxury of entering anyone's home, and the sensations produced upon her now almost overcame her. Some of the places with which she had been familiar in her girlhood, in the quiet, unprogressive old town where her own home had been, came back to her as she sat there, her eyes lingering upon the many things which pleased her fancy. A small number, if any, of those old homes now remained, she reflected, as she had known them; and this home was probably, with a few others perhaps, exceptional, in the great, rushing world of New York, where nothing seems to last but for a day. How was it, she found herself asking, that modern life, always professing to seek the best, so often succeeded only in spoiling things, in destroying the

realities to make place for ephemeral, unimportant effects? While she was considering this point Mr. Elliott entered, and so completely did he fill the room with his fine, manly presence and cordial manner, that Helen quite lost sight of everything but of him.

"Now," said he, after greeting her as he would a friend rather than as a mere business acquaintance, "I am going to take you up-stairs into my own den, where I have some papers we will look over, and then I am going to have my wife come in and meet you," and leading the way, his strong, vigorous figure mounted the stately staircase which led to the second floor of the house. On this floor, in the rear portion of the building, Mr. Elliott had what he called his "own den," a place in no way like a den, except that when pressed with work he allowed himself the privilege of retiring thither and of barring the door against all intruders. The only person demanding the special right of entrance there at all times was Mr. Elliott's wife; who by way of announcing herself had adopted a certain simple system of taps which had never yet failed to gain for her admittance to her husband's presence, even when he was most occupied or perplexed. Into this sanctum, Helen was now ushered; and there a new delight came over her, for she realized that here, at least, a man like Mr. Elliott might with perfect liberty take life upon his own terms. The room was not at all luxurious, but it was spacious—the whole rear end of the house on this floor having been converted into one apartment. There were no windows in the side walls, for these

had been covered from ceiling to floor with long, deep shelves, upon which were literally heaped books and pamphlets of every size and description. Into the rear wall, directly facing the entrance, a single, large square window had been built, by which means abundant air and light were admitted.

The arrangement of the room was according to a pet idea of Mr. Elliott's, and here, sheltered from the noise and disturbances of down-town life, he did all his serious reading, and most of that strong, incisive editorial work, which had placed him so high in his profession. This editor's ideal workshop delighted Helen; her face broke into a smile of approval and appreciation as she looked about. With an instinctive movement she walked towards the bookshelves. This quiet tribute to the chief charm of the place pleased the owner greatly, and he commenced to take down his favorite authors and rare editions, so that Helen might see them to better advantage.

In this way they soon fell into an intimate form of conversation, which, while largely impersonal, interesting itself chiefly with the lives and thoughts of others, put them at once into the most sympathetic relation. During the first year or two of Helen's married life, while she and Galbraith were still in Europe, she had been accustomed to talk freely with men interested in large subjects, men who knew how to accept her comradeship and enthusiasms in the spirit in which they were meant. Galbraith's artistic career in New York had been far too short-lived for her to become identified with the people of

professional importance there, and so all outside intellectual intercourse had disappeared from her-life. To take this up again with such a man as Sherman Elliott was to recall to Helen's mind the most inspiriting associations of the past, and to renew for her the interests and aspirations which had belonged to that time.

Something sweet and gracious, which her great dignity served only to enhance, came from Helen's personality, affecting Mr. Elliott in a peculiar way, seeming to increase in him a deeper sense of the possible loveliness of life. In many ways, in points of person and character, no woman had ever been lovelier than was Helen Galbraith, but something in Mr. Elliott himself influenced her this afternoon to show to him merely the ideal side of her nature, the side most charming in her, most likely to affect a man of imagination. Mr. Elliott, however, was never the man to lose his balance about a beautiful woman—to allow his emotions to become intoxicated by her charms. He held himself well in hand concerning all women—no matter how alive his perceptions might be, to the finer, more subtle things about them. His interests in life were of the kind to exclude all sentimentality from his mind, had it not been inherent with his strong, direct nature to do so. He looked upon women as the pleasing, lovable beings of life, who were to be protected and encouraged by the hand stronger than their own. Any more intimate personal relation with them than this he could not think of for himself, except in connection with his own wife.

Mr. Elliott and Helen had been talking quite half

an hour when Mrs. Elliott entered. Mr. Elliott had told his wife his own impressions of Helen, giving at the same time the fragments of Helen's story as Mr. Westmore had imparted them to him. Mrs. Elliott's interest was deeply enlisted by the narration, and Helen had been asked to the house with the aim of bringing into her life some kind of friendly encouragement, though business was the decoy used to attract her there.

"Here is my wife, Mrs. Galbraith!" said Mr. Elliott. Helen was startled for a moment by the woman's appearance. While not beautiful in the accepted sense, her face, her person, and her manner held something far more attractive than mere beauty can ever express. She was tall and slender, with a very dark complexion lighted up by splendidly radiant eyes. Her hair, commencing to show an occasional gray lock, helped to emphasize at once the darkness and the radiance. Helen was not aware that she also took Mrs. Elliott by surprise. Her husband had in a measure prepared her for the appearance of their visitor, but Helen's beauty was of a kind which no description could make quite comprehensible. Helen had about her that something which is indeed rare—the quality of charm. It is a magical gift, this quality of personal charm, born with one, not acquired. In most cases, no doubt, we are inclined to over-rate the power of intellectual sympathies in the formation of human friendships. Those small personal traits which we can rarely describe are after all the most effective things in bringing people together. "Men talk of morals," says Emerson, "but it is manners that

associate us." This quality of charm caused Mrs. Elliott upon a first acquaintance to take Helen to her heart; in a few moments the two women felt each a certain kinship to the other.

"Mrs. Elliott has a plan for us this afternoon, Mrs. Galbraith," said the editor finally, breaking in upon their conversation. "There is a retrospective exhibition of pictures held by the Society of American Artists in the Fine Arts Building. My wife's plan is to have you go with us there for an hour."

"Indeed, I don't see how I can well do so," replied Helen; her heart fluttering at the mere thought, so long was it since she had gone out anywhere in the world. "I really could not leave my husband so long," she added, "without arranging for it beforehand."

"Oh, I shall be very sorry," said Mrs. Elliott, "to have my little scheme miscarry. Come with us. Do!" Her manner and voice were full of a sweet entreaty.

"I can manage about your husband," interposed Mr. Elliott. "There is a telegraph system here in New York, you remember. I will send him a message, and direct that it be sent on to him at once."

"Now, that settles it!" exclaimed Mrs. Elliott. "This husband of mine," she added, "is the most resourceful man I ever knew, and you really cannot resist him now, I am sure, Mrs. Galbraith."

"You are very good to me, but honestly, do you know," said Helen, feeling that she might speak freely, "I shrink now from going anywhere."

Yes, they both understood. Helen's pale, sad face

told them as no words could have done how true this was.

"You will not mind it so much after you have gone once," said Mr. Elliott kindly, "and the fresh, new influences will help you in the work that is before you."

"He is right in that, I am sure," said Mrs. Elliott, laying her hand upon Helen's arm.

"You are very good to wish it so much," replied Helen still hesitating. "I have shut myself up so completely to obligations for the past few years, that I have become possessed of the feeling, that I should be discharging some duty whenever I go anywhere."

"Well, you can go now and do this also," said Mr. Elliott. "I meant, if possible, to keep business out of this, but since you compel me, Mrs. Galbraith, I will say I wish you to go officially to this exhibition when it has lasted a few days longer, and I think a visit there this afternoon will help you later."

"I can't help seeing," said Helen, "that you say this to get me to accept. Your goodness overcomes me. Of course I will go, and gladly, and I should apologize, no doubt, for not being more gracious about it. But you understand, I trust?" She looked appealingly from the one to the other; and the husband and wife, moved by the charming naturalness of her manner, said earnestly in one voice:

"Of course we do." Mrs. Elliott went away for her bonnet and wrap, and for a few moments her husband and Helen were again alone together.

"You will find need, Mrs. Galbraith," said he, "for certain outside influences, and they will help you in your work far more than you can now realize. Achievements are not solely the result of conscious labor. Many other things enter into them; and chief among these is the claim which humanity presses upon us. Did you ever hear the legend of Friar Jerome and the Beautiful Book?" He was standing in front of her as he spoke, and his manly strength delighted her as Galbraith's had once done.

"No, I think not."

"It illustrates so happily the point I wish to make, that I will tell it to you. Friar Jerome was absorbed in his work on the Beautiful Book, but, against his will, he was forced to leave it to minister to human needs. He found on returning that an angel had stood at his desk and wrought at his task during his absence."

"I see," said Helen thoughtfully, and her smile showed him that she understood.

Shortly after Mr. Elliott, his wife, and Helen had left Gramercy Park, Mr. Westmore appeared there. An hour earlier he had sought the Chief at his office, but being told that he was not likely to be down town this afternoon, since he had directed that Mrs. Galbraith be sent up to his residence, Mr. Westmore at once found the business which he had on hand very urgent, and so up-town he went as quickly as he could conveniently do so. Being in-

formed that Mr. and Mrs. Elliott had gone out with their visitor, he put questions to the waitress which soon disclosed their destination, for Mr. Elliott never went away without leaving word where he might be found, in case any emergency arose at the office. Not at all baffled by the situation, Mr. Westmore turned his face immediately towards West Fifty-seventh Street.

The National Academy of Design in New York City was founded about the end of the first quarter of the present century. From that time on, for many years, the standard of art for America fixed by the decrees of the Academy seemed to be final and unalterable. It became apparent, however, as the idea of art in this country began to develop beneath the influence of the younger men who had studied in Europe, that the old Academy was laboring under difficulties, mostly of a moral nature, and that its influence was becoming greatly impaired, if not destroyed, by the extreme conservatism which marked it. Twenty years before the time of which we write all the Art Societies in America consisted, to a great extent, of men of second-rate abilities, and the character and methods of the National Academy of Design formed no exception to this rule. On account of its prominence and power, however, its course was more obvious than that of the lesser Societies. When men capable of a higher class of work than that accomplished in America up to 1870 commenced to enter the lists of

art, it was evident that they stood little chance of getting their canvases into the Academy exhibitions. The old Academicians, no doubt honest in their actions, were so biased by the conservatism to which they had committed themselves, that they judged nearly all the new work as bad work, because its purpose was for the most part incomprehensible to them. The younger men found the pictures which they sent to the Academy exhibits either rejected outright, "skied," or hidden in dark corners. Such a course could have but one result. A spirit of discontent arose, which was not slow in finding expression for itself, and in 1877 eighteen of the disaffected ones formed the Society of American Artists, and gave an exhibition of their own. This experiment of these "younger fellows," as they were called in amiable depreciation, did not at first disturb the serene composure of the Academicians. But soon it began to be perceived that a serious blow had been struck at the old order of things. The exhibitions of the American Artists continued from year to year, always growing larger and more important, until it was evident, even to the Academy, that the new Society had become its rival. Upon this realization, the Academy elected to itself some of the most active of the Society's members, seeking thus to weaken the new organization and at the same time renew its own strength. Having become Academicians, some of the Society men resigned, though most of the younger men remained loyal to that body which their faith and zeal had created. In this way the Society of American Artists had its birth, developing by degrees into a perma-

nent organization, which to-day commands the respect and interest of all art-loving people.

It was to one of the Society's exhibitions that the Elliotts and Helen Galbraith now went. The building erected by the Fine Arts Society—a gathering, by the way, of several associations devoted to architecture and the study of art is classical in design and beautiful in all its appointments, exterior and interior. Helen was at once delightfully impressed with this building, and she was very capable of forming a correct judgment concerning such matters. Before their marriage and afterwards she and Galbraith had haunted all the picture exhibits available to them in Europe. The best kind of room for an exhibit, the proper amount of light to admit to it, and the manner of hanging a picture had been often discussed by them at length.

"These are charming rooms!" said Helen, pausing to survey them as a whole.

"Yes, I think the Society has a right to be proud of them," replied Mr. Elliott.

"And this looks like a very good exhibit," she went on, glancing about at the pictures to be seen from where she stood. "Look! There are two beautiful Hunts. Poor man." They walked over to the pictures Helen had indicated, and side by side with them they soon perceived some of the most recent conquests in the world of art, by such men as Shirlaw, Sargent, Chase, St. Gaudens, and many others whose names Helen recognized at once as representative of the Society of American Artists. The atmosphere in which she lived made these names very familiar ones to her, and she also knew

very well what the men stood for in their special lines.

"Here is something I like very much," said Mr. Elliott, stopping in front of an exceedingly interesting portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson.

"If there is one modern writer whom all men could be said to admire above another," said Helen, "I think Stevenson is that man. Yes, this is good," she added, then moving away, and leading the others unconsciously along, she soon found herself standing before an old, familiar friend, one which brought back many pleasant memories to her.

"How glad I am to see this! Mr. Chase's *Ready for a Ride!*" she exclaimed. Helen had naturally imbibed much of Galbraith's ideal opinion of Mr. Chase, and she experienced now a genuine thrill of pleasure in coming unexpectedly across so fine a piece of work by him.

"Do you know," she said, turning from the picture to Mr. and Mrs. Elliott, "that I am really ashamed when I remember what, after all, more than anything else has made me so familiar with this picture? A Parisian manufacturer took a great fancy to it, and stamped it boldly upon the big pottery plaques which he made. At one time these were to be seen everywhere in the Paris shops. But my husband, I am sure, would be very much discouraged concerning my art education, should I tell him how at home I feel with this picture, just because I recall so vividly those perfectly horrible big plaques."

"I have seen somewhere," said Mr. Elliott, "something which Mrs. Van Rensselaer has to say

about this picture. Mr. Chase, according to her account, sent it home from Munich before he came himself, and sold it to a dealer who very soon sold it to the Union League Club. What the club paid for it, Mrs. Van Rensselaer says she does not know, but she does say a friend of Mr. Chase's told her that all *he* received for it was a hundred dollars. Rather interesting, is it not, in the light of what a Chase canvas, fresh from the studio, brings to-day?"

"Indeed it is," replied Helen, "especially when one realizes what a beautiful picture this is. There is something very charming about it to me! It is the sentiment it expresses, I think," and she turned to look again and more closely at the canvas.

"But you must not forget, Mrs. Galbraith," said a new voice by her side, "that Mr. Chase can do infinitely better than that to-day." It was the voice of Andrew Tompson, who, it appeared, knew the Elliotts, and so seemed to feel at liberty to make himself one of their party.

"Yes," replied Helen, "Alex would say this represents his Munich period." Helen accepted Tompson's presence very quietly, but her reserve of manner told him that she had not forgotten their last interview.

Tompson looked at the picture with the steady, critical gaze of one who claims the right to express an opinion. "This is fine of its kind," he remarked, "but the artist has worked away from the influence which is responsible for this picture. You see in it the Munich love of conventional illumination and

low tones. Mr. Chase, however, has freed himself now from all that. Here," continued Tompson, turning to a different canvas, "is his Duveneck, in which one sees something of the same spirit."

"Oh, I remember that!" exclaimed Helen with delight. "It created a genuine sensation when it was first shown, did it not?"

"Yes," replied Tompson, "it was considered a notable picture when first exhibited. It will certainly always be considered a fine one, I think. Mr. Chase is different from that to-day; yet I question if he is really any finer than that, or ever will be."

"He is different, because he has set himself to cultivate the spirit of American art—is it not so?" asked Mr. Elliott, who up to this time had been content to say very little himself—so charmed was he to watch Helen, and to discover from her spontaneous expressions of opinion just what was the quality of her mind.

"That explains it," replied Tompson, "and for this reason my friend Galbraith has for him the greatest enthusiasm." Here Helen moved on to the next picture, joining Mrs. Elliott. Mr. Elliott followed her, and Tompson was for the time diverted by some friends of his, who came up and engaged him in conversation. Mr. and Mrs. Elliott both noticed how Helen's spirits had risen, and how her face glowed as she went about the gallery. It was apparent that she had laid aside her cares and was allowing herself to enjoy all the memories of a happy past, which the sight of many of these paintings revived in her mind.

"Here is something delightful!" said Helen,

moving forward and carrying Mrs. Elliott with her. It was St. Gaudens' relief-portrait of Bastien Lepage. Mrs. Elliott did not know the picture, but she saw at once that Helen's emotions were deeply stirred at sight of it, for tears came to her eyes. In fact it suggested to her many things that once she and Galbraith had cherished together. After this she fell into silence, and the three walked quietly through the remainder of the exhibit, coming finally to a room where they sat down to have a cup of tea before taking their leave.

Andrew Tompson, evidently, was unable to get away from his friends, society people who detained him for the purpose of profiting by his knowledge of art matters. On most occasions he would have been delighted to enlighten these benighted *philistines*, but now he longed to escape from them that he might follow Helen Galbraith. When he found himself free to do as he wished, he discovered that Helen and the Elliotts had disappeared, and, starting on a search for them, he arrived at last before the room in which they sat drinking tea. For a moment Tompson stood at the entrance observing those within, especially Helen, whose face was turned from him. The party now consisted of four, Mr. Westmore having joined them, and they sat together around a small table which could not conveniently accommodate a fifth person. Tompson, however, felt now no desire to join them ; his zest was quite destroyed by Westmore's presence. For a few moments he stood unnoticed by any of the party, then turning, away, he passed into a room beyond, where he determined to wait and watch their

departure. Tompson's mind was filled with many ugly suspicions, and waiting in moody silence, he worked himself into a quite dangerous frenzy. During the past two weeks he had made a point of obtaining information in regard to Mr. Westmore, and the things which he learned concerning this prominent citizen in no way inspired Tompson with confidence in his character. Had Andrew Tompson been a genuine friend, or even a man capable of an unselfish act, he would very easily have found a way to speak candidly to Alex Galbraith or even to Helen of the facts he had learned concerning Mr. Westmore. Being neither of these things, he preferred to let matters alone, disregardful of results. Possibly this would prove the surest way of getting his own revenge for the scorn which Helen Galbraith had not long before heaped upon him. Averse as Helen was to Andrew Tompson, she yet had no suspicion of the vital falseness of his character—a falseness which had its roots and branch in pure selfishness. With all his refinements and artistic tastes, he could never see beyond himself ; and it was especially characteristic of him that in his estimate of people he often mistook culture for goodness, distinction of manner for integrity of character, and grace of person for that more exalted grace of heart which is not always to be perceived at once in the individual.

As the little party sat drinking tea in the Fine Arts Building, they naturally drifted into conversation concerning the exhibition which had brought them there. Mr. Elliott did not consider himself a critical judge of art matters, though he had for

them that sincere interest which belongs to every man of broad culture, and of pure, healthy moral tastes. He liked, too, to talk of them, and his thoughts concerning them were not lacking in suggestiveness.

"I often think," said he, "that we do not allow ourselves to learn from an art exhibit what we really should learn from it. Take the matter of scenic coloring, for instance; how little we really know of it! A child with his water-colors painting the grass all green, the roads all brown, and the sky and sea possibly one deep, ungraduated tone of blue represents, I believe, without a great deal of exaggeration, the understanding which most of us have of the real shades to be seen in the earth and sky. Yet looking at good pictures calls our attention to our own ignorance and false ideas concerning all this."

"My husband often says," remarked Helen, "that people generally have no idea of how thoroughly all landscape painting is based upon a careful study of out-of-doors. If they did, he says they would soon learn how to study nature through pictures, and so get it properly interpreted to them."

"Exactly," replied Mr. Elliott. "One opens his eyes and looks about him quite differently after coming from a picture exhibit. The true province of art, I should say, was just this—to open people's eyes to nature."

"There seems always to be, however, a great many inconsistencies, even in good paintings," said Mr. Westmore.

"Well, yes, that is true," said Mr. Elliott, "but

then you must take these things largely on faith, it seems to me. Undoubtedly the intimate acquaintance with nature, which most landscape painters cultivate, should give them an insight into the realities not possible to be comprehended by those leading a shut-in life."

"This talk reminds me," said Helen, "of a story which I have heard about Turner. A woman was protesting in his presence against the effects which he wrought into his pictures, saying that she had never seen anything in nature like them. 'Ah! Madam, but don't you wish you *could!*' was his reply."

Pleasant and stimulating as this conversation was, Helen felt that she must not linger longer, for she thought of Alex and how with the approach of night he would begin to feel forsaken. At her suggestion, therefore, the party left the tea-room and passed into the street. It was nearly the hour of sunset, and a rich light from the west illuminated the façade of the building beneath which they for a moment stood. Mrs. Elliott held Helen's hand in hers at parting. In some subtle way these two women knew that they comprehended each other; and Helen's heart was filled with deep gratitude that this should be so. When she had made her adieux to the Elliotts, Helen went toward Broadway, in order to catch the next car bound for down-town. Mr. Westmore insisted upon accompanying her, though she protested as much as possible without creating a scene. As Helen stepped into the car followed by Mr. Westmore, the Elliotts stood watching them.

"I wish he would let her go alone!" said Mrs. Elliott, turning to her husband.

"It was very evident that she did not wish his company," replied Mr. Elliott.

"Yes, I am sure she does not like him."

"There is something that I do not understand about it. Westmore spoke to me of her as his dear, personal friend. Yet from her manner, I should say, she does not look upon *him* in that light."

"She is such a beautiful, charming creature," continued Mrs. Elliott, "that I do wish he played no part in her affairs. Do you think," she asked earnestly, "that he really wants to befriend her, or may there be some other motive?"

"I cannot tell, my dear. Perhaps Westmore could not be the right sort of friend to any very beautiful woman. I sometimes think this of him—yet it may be an injustice. In this case, let us hope that it is!"

"Yes, let us hope so," echoed Mrs. Elliott, "and also let us be good friends to the girl ourselves, which I am sure is the best way."

"Without doubt it is," said Mr. Elliott.

Neither Helen's opposition, nor the prayer of Mr. and Mrs. Elliott seemed in any way to affect Mr. Westmore. He carried his point: he went with Helen all the way to the cottage in Jersey. And he did more. He made her listen to what he had to say, and left her, though indignant, conscious of the fact that he had a masterful way of doing whatever he set out to do, and that in the matter of finesse she was no match for him.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Andrew Tompson left the art exhibit, he did a very unusual thing—he went directly to his home in Twentieth Street, and dined there quietly with his mother. The Tompsons, mother and son, represented old, distinguished families; they prided themselves considerably upon their conservative tastes, and made a point of clinging to their inherited traditions and customs. For this reason, disregarding the noise and bustle of traffic that had invaded Twentieth Street, they remained in their old home, built many years before by Andrew's father, the interior of which was, in many respects, far more delightful than that of many of the modern, up-town houses owned by their friends. Tompson lived here a life that exactly suited his tastes and his habits. His mother was engaged in various charities and missions whose interests consumed most of her time; thus she in no way interfered with her son, though she delighted in him, and was always pleased when he bestowed any attention upon her. As, however, he spent much of his time in travel, his mother and he had learned to live their lives quite independently of one another. Even while living in the same house, they did not see a very great deal of each other, for Mrs. Tompson occupied the lower floors of their home, while her son had converted the third floor into an ideal abode for a

bachelor. There he spent most of his hours when at home, reading and smoking cigarettes.

This evening, however, after Tompson had done the very unselfish thing of dining with his mother, he did not linger long in his own rooms. He remained there only long enough to make an unusually precise and careful toilet, then, leaving the house, he started to walk up to his Club, not taking the car as was his custom. Anyone who had noticed him as he walked would have been struck with the apparent absorption of the man in his own thoughts. Among other things, he was congratulating himself upon getting through his dinner in a calm, decent sort of way, talking quietly to his mother on subjects of general interest. He was also reviewing the past few weeks and his experiences with Helen Galbraith. During these weeks Tompson had been busy informing himself concerning Mr. Westmore, and had learned many interesting things in regard to this gentleman. Some of these related to financial matters and consisted of whispers of strange manipulations in stocks by this clever, bold speculator. Others were of a more personal nature, having to do with Mr. Westmore's domestic discontent, even suggesting certain moral irregularities on his part, which quite established Tompson's suspicions of the man's character. One club man, to whom Tompson mentioned Westmore, had even gone so far as to say that the wealthy banker's persistent pursuit of pretty women was now an open secret, and that everybody in New York interested in such matters could point to one handsome, dashing *divorcée*, who a few years before had successfully made her fortune

by pleasing the taste of Mr. Westmore. During these weeks Tompson had also learned that Helen was associated with Mr. Elliott's paper; and knowing of Westmore's financial control of this journal, Tompson felt convinced that the latter's influence had placed her there. This being the case, he concluded that Helen had admitted Westmore to a kind of intimacy with her which she had denied to himself. Certainly Westmore must have received Helen's confidence concerning her practical difficulties, otherwise he could have been in no condition to render her assistance. As Tompson now reflected on these things, recalling at the same time the manner in which Helen had scorned and refused the love and help he had offered her, his wounded vanity pledged itself to vengeance.

It had come into Tompson's mind to do a certain thing, and as his defiant thoughts mastered him his relish for it increased more and more. He turned into Broadway, and pursued his course up-town along this thoroughfare. As his thoughts became clearer, and his determination more fixed, he commenced to observe, as was his habit, the changing scenes presented to the eye at the different parts of the street. Tompson liked especially to observe the beat and throb of life in a great city at night; it was then easier, he thought, to discover artistic effects, as well as the unexpected and bizarre. He had traveled much and was familiar with most of the great cities of the world. It was natural, therefore, for him to contrast different places—to find one scene suggestive of another. Something in the atmosphere of this night, something still more in the

appearance of the various types of people whom he passed, revived in his mind many of the impressions which Paris had imprinted there. Paris, he reflected, his personal thoughts retiring for the moment as he became interested in the things about him, has the reputation, beyond doubt, of being the most cosmopolitan city in the world. Tompson often found himself, as to-night, questioning the truth of this, and wondering, if, after all, with its apparent narrowness New York might not be even more cosmopolitan than was Paris. So many conflicting influences, it seemed to him, encompass the New-Yorker, and he is naturally so receptive, that he cannot but be cosmopolitan. What made him think now especially of these things was the snatches of different foreign languages which he caught, as he passed groups, here and there, conversing earnestly in words which had no Saxon sound to them. Some one, he remembered, had said, that a stranger who sojourns in Paris is of no consequence until he speaks the language of the city, and conforms to its traditions. But in New York Tompson could see that these things are all quite different. In the great American metropolis the foreigner retains his language and customs, conducts his household upon a foreign plan, and adds one other to the many influences which go to make the general tone of life there. In what other city of the world, Tompson asked himself, are things conducted in this way—in what other city can be found so many of the influences which conspire to produce the cosmopolite? Tompson's mind, however, was not long occupied with such thoughts as these, for, walking rapidly,

he shortly arrived at Thirty-fourth Street, and there turning aside from Broadway, and walking in the direction of Fifth Avenue, he reached his Club in a few-minutes.

Having then a very definite plan before him, Tompson, when he had entered the Manhattan, commenced at once a tour of the rooms. He was in search of an old friend of his, a Mr. George Clayton, a man, by the way, whom he seldom sought, unless he wished some favor of him. Tompson, knowing well the habits of this old beau, had counted upon finding him at the Manhattan between the hours of nine and ten. He soon found him resplendent in evening dress, and engaged, as he had been engaged nearly every evening for the past thirty years, in retailing the fashionable gossip of the day to several of the younger fellows who were bitten with the ambition to be considered *en rapport* with all scandal floating within the limits of a certain social set. In the matter of collecting and dispensing gossip Mr. Clayton was a veritable artist. Something not exactly definable about this man made it easy for people to talk freely with him. Many discreet and elderly ladies, socially and otherwise distinguished, had rendered into his keeping the most sacred and intimate secrets of families with whom they were on terms of the closest friendship.

In this way Mr. Clayton's mind had become so well stored with certain kinds of information, that he could nearly always throw light upon any situation mentioned to him. The things concerning which he was so well versed were, as a rule, abominable to Andrew Tompson, yet in thinking out

the best way to his present end, Tompson remembered Clayton's varied social interests and connections, and perceived that he might be useful to him. Somehow, Clayton and his store of knowledge seemed no longer so abominable and repellent as formerly. This man was after all probably a necessary and useful member of society. Tompson now joined the group gathered about Clayton, who was telling in his best manner the last misdemeanor on the part of a prominent married woman, who, having lived quietly and contentedly for ten years as a model wife and mother, had lately surprised society by breaking her bonds and plunging into the wildest gaieties. As a rule Clayton's stories were received only with approbation. This evening, however, one young man, evidently more simply constructed than the rest of the listeners, dared to raise a protesting voice against what seemed to him outrageous conduct on the part of the lady in question.

"Why, it is the plainest thing in the world!" insisted Clayton. "You could expect nothing else." The woman was bored to death. A perfectly adoring husband — perfectly arranged house — perfectly charming children! Far too easy and monotonous an existence for a woman of any spirit. Take my word for it, boys, the best way to lose your wife is by being too good to her!" The narrator's face wore a radiant expression as he gave out this warning, undoubtedly convinced that he had solved the whole problem of marital infelicity.

"You are an advocate, Mr. Clayton, are you not, of the old theory—*a woman, a dog, and a walnut*

tree, the more you beat them, the better they be?" asked Tompson.

"Not quite so bad as that, Mr. Tompson, not quite so bad!" protested Clayton mildly, evidently pleased at having attracted the newcomer's attention. Tompson represented the most exclusive set in the Club, and a man like Clayton, who went everywhere and knew everybody, appreciated the distinction which attached to being admitted to anything like intimacy with that set.

"We all recognize the fact, though, I think," continued Clayton, "that the best woman in the world will break away from a dead monotony when it becomes intolerable to her—and this, it seems to me, is a satisfactory explanation of our friend's conduct."

"Possibly that is true." The young men who had been listening to Clayton now moved away, leaving Tompson alone with him. Tompson's manner was so utterly cold and supercilious towards the men whom he did not look upon as his associates, that his mere presence was usually enough to break up any party of light-headed gossips. To have done this exactly suited his purpose at present. Turning to Clayton he said in a tone extremely personal for him:

"I am feeling very much bored myself to-night with the monotony of things, Mr. Clayton, and I wonder if you would be willing to aid me in finding relief. It is an exceptional request, I know, but if you can spare the time this evening, how would you like to take me to call upon the Westmores—of course you know them?" Tompson added.

In his career of sixty years Mr. George Clayton had seen a very great deal of this world; he was thoroughly accustomed to surprises, so much so indeed, that he believed himself to be prepared for the most unexpected things; yet now he actually stared at Tompson as if to convince himself that the man was sober and in his right mind. It struck him as a most unusual proceeding on the part of a man like this, to start up after a life of extremest exclusiveness and undertake such people as the Westmores. However, the thought came to him that Tompson might have fallen into financial troubles, and had therefore determined that Miss Westmore, one of this year's débutantes, would be the readiest solution of his difficulties. Scenting an interesting state of affairs, Mr. Clayton placed himself effusively at Tompson's disposal, and the two men took their way together up the avenue.

Within twenty minutes after their starting forth, they presented themselves at the door of a very massive and pretentious house, conspicuous even among the many imposing residences in the neighborhood. Clayton wondered what would be the effect upon Tompson of all the gorgeous display which greeted them as they entered the hall of the Westmores' home. To Clayton's surprise Tompson seemed to accept the situation very gracefully. He had come to this house purely to observe and to draw his own conclusions therefrom; and no matter what might be his impressions, he was determined in no way to betray himself. Scarcely had he been two minutes in Mrs. Westmore's presence before he saw how utterly "impossible" she was; especially

so, as she seemed to be in total ignorance of the fact. Tompson, of course, could perceive nothing in this formal kind of an interview of the warm, generous heart in this woman, who had loved Westmore through all his inconsistencies. He judged purely by the fixed, accepted standard of refinement and gentility. Red of face, coarse of body and feature, possessed of an assertive manner and a most unpleasant freedom of speech, the woman showed at once how unfitted she was for social achievements. Tompson, who could be very tactful when he wished, adapted himself wonderfully to his company, talking most agreeably to Mrs. Westmore, and at the same time reflecting how splendidly this type of womanhood matched her vulgar, offensive surroundings.

The drawing-room, in which Mrs. Westmore and her guests sat, was not wanting in appointments and adornments of the most costly nature. Money had been spent here lavishly, and with the thought of producing a grand effect. The dress of the ladies present gave Tompson much the same impression as did the house. Miss Westmore, clad much too boldly for a débutante, was but an intensified reflection of her mother. It was clearly evident that the advantages of a fashionable school and of travel abroad had here conspired to increase the native grossness of an entirely commonplace young lady. In truth, Tompson groaned in his innermost soul! the bowels of compassion were stirred in him by the sights upon which he looked, as nothing else could have stirred them. His suspicions and jealousy of Mr. Westmore were for the moment turned into pity. If these were his womenkind, his daily, in-

timate companions, no wonder the afflicted man had sought relief in *affaires du cœur* with women like Helen Galbraith! Never, Tompson thought, had he seen a case in which more legitimate excuses could be made for a man, and had not Westmore stood in his own way, he would then and there have absolved him, and turned back to his own esthetic pursuits, more than ever convinced that they alone were of real worth.

Just at this time Mrs. Westmore was very much consumed with the anxieties of launching her third daughter upon New York society. Though she had failed so signally to embrace the opportunities for self-improvement which had been possible to her, there still remained a point of contact, or sympathy between Mrs. Westmore and her husband; namely, the interest they both had in the advancement of their children. Their two eldest daughters had been most satisfactorily settled in life. While without beauty and defying any real polish, they possessed genuinely fine qualities of character which made them women of some consequence in the positions which they now occupied. The first daughter was married to a young man of excellent connections, who, though he lived upon the money furnished him by Mr. Westmore, yet did so in a manner to reflect great social credit upon his wife's entire family. The second daughter had done even better than the first, having wedded an aspiring young clergyman, a man of real force and importance, who had so advanced in ecclesiastical circles as to be able to get himself made a bishop. Concerning their third daughter, the one upon whom Clayton

and Tompson were calling, Mr. and Mrs. Westmore justifiably entertained high marital ambitions. A precedent had been established in their family from which they could take no step backward. According to her standard, Mrs. Westmore took very accurate measure of all the men who called at her house, or who seemed in any way to seek the favor of her daughter. Miss Westmore, be it said, stood a much better chance of making a fine marriage than Tompson would have believed from the manner and the appearance of the girl. Though lamentably like her mother in face and figure, she had also her mother's warm heart, filled with generous impulses, which attached to her many staunch friends, often superior to herself in externals, yet who gladly forgave her deficiencies for the sake of her kindness of nature. This accounted for the presence in the drawing-room of several charming young girls, representing families well known to both Clayton and Tompson, whose position in every way, except for the matter of money, far surpassed that occupied by the Westmores. One of these girls, of an especially rich and radiant type of beauty, attracted Tompson, who, having done his duty as well as he felt himself capable of doing it by Mrs. Westmore and her daughter, now crossed the room and entered into conversation with this young girl. When Mrs. Westmore saw that Tompson was occupied at a safe distance from her, she turned toward a young man who, she knew, was supposed to be behind the scenes in regard to social New York, and tapping him on the shoulder with her fan she said:

"Now tell me, Mr. Anderson, *who* is that Mr. Tompson?" The young man addressed turned suddenly about as Mrs. Westmore administered her harmless, if familiar, tap to his shoulder. Placing his hand discreetly over his lip he replied:

"That man is Andrew Tompson. Quite exclusive, you know—belongs to the old set—prides himself, I believe, on his aristocratic blood and his culture, and thinks himself privileged to snub most people unmercifully when he chooses to do so." Evidently this young man had received no favors at Tompson's hands.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Westmore. "Now, that's too bad! He seems so quiet and nice." She looked across the room regretfully at Tompson, and in her honest, genuine heart she felt truly sorry for him.

"There you are mistaken, Mrs. Westmore," replied the young man. "It is just the kind of thing most people like immensely—they feel so flattered, you know, when he condescends to them."

"Well, I declare!" again exclaimed Mrs. Westmore. "You don't mean to tell me that such a quiet little man as he is feels himself *that* superior!" After which Mrs. Westmore, inspired by perfect simplicity of purpose, put her glass to her eye and deliberately inspected her guest from tip to toe. This act on the part of his hostess did not escape Tompson, though he continued to converse with the pretty girl who had delivered him from Miss Westmore. No doubt he would have been somewhat shaken had he known the impression he was making upon the robust lady who seemed so vulgar and

material to him. He was a vain man who thought a great deal of his personal appearance, and he liked to appear well even before people who were of little consequence to him.

"He's rather fragile, I should say," remarked Mrs. Westmore to Mr. Anderson, "but I can see that he is a true aristocrat; but a man with those delicate hands isn't likely to be much else." Mrs. Westmore at times made some surprisingly just distinctions. For a few minutes she continued to survey Tompson through her glass, then rising, crossed the room to where he sat. Her thought as she did so was—

"That young man is ill and run down!" What she said was the same thought put in another form.

"Come, my dear," speaking to the dark, handsome girl by Tompson's side, "take Mr. Tompson into the other room, and give him some punch. I am sure he is tired out." Tompson looked up at Mrs. Westmore with surprise expressed upon his face. He was not accustomed to be taken on such familiar terms upon so short an acquaintance. Nevertheless, there was nothing to do but to allow himself to be led into the adjoining room and refreshed by a glass of punch, though he had not been conscious of needing it in any way. He found the informality of this kind of hospitality rather agreeable, especially as it helped him the better to adjust himself to his surroundings. The punch, too, was excellent, Tompson felt himself forced to admit, and experiencing a keen sense of its merits, he was just about to take a second glass, when looking up almost

instinctively, it seemed to him, his eyes fell upon the figure of Mr. Westmore, who at that moment was passing through the hall beyond. Mr. Westmore had evidently just come in from the street, for he still wore his top coat and carried his hat in his hand. The two men saw each other at the same moment. Westmore's countenance expressed some surprise, but he did not hesitate for a moment—upon seeing Tompson he stepped forward at once, and greeted him as one man greets another who comes into his house as a guest for the first time. A few pleasantries were then exchanged between the two men and the young lady who stood at Tompson's side, after which Mr. Westmore turned and left them, going up, as had been his first intention, to his private apartments.

Mr. Westmore was a very clever man, a very clever man indeed. People scarcely gave him credit for the amount of penetration which he possessed. Certain ideas came to him rapidly as he mounted the stairs, and as he closed the door of his own room a peculiar smile played about his dark face.

"That young man is deep!" he said aloud to himself. "But he has a wily old fox to outwit this time!" and so disposing of the matter, he sank into a softly cushioned chair and let his thoughts flow back over the hours which he had spent that afternoon with Helen Galbraith.

Much against Mr. Clayton's wish Tompson ended his visit before that loquacious gentleman had half finished relating all the interesting things he had on hand. Tompson, however, after having seen what he came to see, was eager to get away, and once

out of the house he was equally eager to be left alone, to pursue undisturbed his own thoughts. Nor did it take him long to make this wish of his plain to Clayton, who, belonging to the order of individual that does not care to inhabit for any length of time uncongenial spheres, soon took himself off. Then Tompson commenced to sum up the events of the day, and to measure the distance he had traveled since morning. Nothing very definite had as yet been arrived at; still he felt that he had really taken a step forward, and scored a point against Helen Galbraith. Certainly he had satisfied himself of one thing: her association with Westmore was, beyond doubt, a personal one. The manner in which Westmore had taken possession of her that afternoon at the gallery and carried her off settled this point for Tompson convincingly. As he thought of it, another thing too was now settled for him. He perfectly understood how the pursuit of pretty women had, as the world said, become a fixed passion with Westmore. No man who possessed a taste for the dignified niceties of life—and Tompson took it for granted that Westmore did possess some taste for these things—could be expected to submit quietly, without compensation of some kind, to the vulgarities expressed in the person and manner of Mrs. Westmore. To a man of Andrew Tompson's fastidious nature Westmore's life seemed nothing less than a daily torture, a continual crucifixion of every ideal. Himself under the spell of Helen Galbraith's charms, he understood, even while he resented it fiercely, how Westmore might turn to her simply to feed his soul and æsthetic sense upon

She was far away from him, far away indeed, Tompson knew now, but as he thought of her his ordinarily cold heart leaped with the warmth and throb of passion. Never had she seemed to him so desirable! The less approachable he found her the more he longed to make her his own! These thoughts almost maddened him. He was violently angry with himself that he had no power to resist this spell which was upon him; he was tenfold more angry with Helen, who had so innocently produced it. As he walked nervously down the avenue, some unrelenting demon seemed to reveal to him in the clearest outlines the situation just as it was. Helen Galbraith would ever remain unattainable to him—even in the event of Galbraith's death. There was no power in him which could ever awaken her emotions. He was convinced that for her he would ever continue an insufficient person, unequal to any of the greater demands of her life.

He knew that these things were true—true and unalterable. He had always been a cold, self-possessed man, one exercising absolute control over the conditions of his own life. This storm of passion which now shook him he *would* subdue, *would* make subservient to his purposes, as he had made other things! Yes, he too would play his cards, and by all the powers of Heaven and Hell, he would play them effectually! If Helen Galbraith felt him to be insufficient for her needs and scorned his love, he would by his own methods undermine the very ground on which she stood, and convince her, against all odds, that there was force of some kind in him! Never before had he been possessed by

such thoughts, but now that they had come upon him, he grasped them desperately, as the one means of maintaining and enforcing his manhood. In the past he had always looked upon men who yielded to the sway of passion as weak and morbid—worthy only of supreme contempt. For the first time he saw things differently, and what had seemed weakness to him he now looked upon as strength; those whom he had formerly condemned as unwise he now believed to have found a safer and surer way. Out of these troubled and hurrying thoughts one thing became clear and luminous to Tompson. He would endure coldness, but humiliation never! When the time for settling up accounts came, as he was sure it would some day come, Helen Galbraith should pay in full to the uttermost farthing! He would set a great price over against the choice she was now making of that wild speculator and libertine Westmore, and when the time came for her to pay, not one jot or tittle of it would he abate!

With this purpose clearly defined in his mind, Tompson walked on at an unprecedented pace, heeding no one who passed him by. Reaching Madison Square he still walked on, down Fifth Avenue. At Eighteenth Street he paused a moment, looked about at the numbers of the houses in that vicinity, then facing towards the east, crossed over to Broadway, and continuing east from this point he finally disappeared into a house which appeared to possess the double character of a residence and place of business.

It is useless, and would be degrading, even if not uninteresting, to follow Andrew Tompson into this

house, and to listen to the exact conversation which he held there with one who should not, under any conditions, ever have touched his life. It is sufficient to say that when, at an early hour of the morning, Tompson turned into his own home, he was perfectly aware that he had been guilty of a dastardly act. He had placed the matter of Helen Galbraith and Mr. Westmore into the hands of a skilled detective! The truth he *must* have. The events of the future *must* come within his knowledge, so that he could deal with them according to his own purposes. This was his excuse, and so entirely had he yielded to the promptings of his lower nature, that he honestly felt himself justified in adopting any course which might realize the end he had in view.

Alas! for such a nature there are no possible exaltations in life—no loveliness of the spirit. The Vision and the Splendor and the Glory too, which *may* belong to Love, are not for such as Andrew Tompson. That charmed life, that life of Love out of which are evoked "the nobler harmonies," had no meaning for this man, whose sensitiveness was pure, unadulterated selfishness, and who recognized no higher quality in life than that of personal happiness.

CHAPTER VIII.

FEBRUARY had come. Late in the afternoon of a chilly and depressing day, Alex Galbraith sat alone, for Helen was making her usual weekly trip into New York to see Mr. Elliott and to consult with him in regard to her work. It had been found necessary, as time went on and Helen's engagement with the paper continued, that she should always be on hand at Mr. Elliott's office one day in the week. Sometimes urgent matters demanded an additional afternoon or morning from her, as the case might be. Usually, however, this one weekly trip sufficed to keep her in touch with things, and up in the practical part of her work. Often, of late, when Helen was absent, Andrew Tompson came and sat with Alex until her return, helping in this way to brighten very much the hours for him. To-day Alex remained quite alone, and the prospect from his west window was so entirely cheerless that he retired into the room and placed himself so that both the light and warmth of the fire might fall pleasantly upon him. In this way he had spent a retrospective hour or two, undisturbed except by Jane who came in occasionally to inquire after his needs. In a sense, all of Galbraith's life was now retrospective; though there was a constant effort on both his and Helen's part to increase his constantly declining interest in present things. This

afternoon, left entirely alone, his mind went more vividly back to the past than was usual. Anyone observing him could have seen readily from the play of his features, as he sat silent and solitary, absorbed in thought, that the memory of many things stirred in him, moving him deeply. The dusk of approaching twilight had gathered in the corners of the room, and smoky shadows veiled the bookshelves, the bas-reliefs, and the pictures on the walls. Galbraith's splendid head was bowed low, his boldly proportioned chin resting on his bosom, and agasint the firelight his profile stood out like those of the Lotos-Eaters.

Galbraith's figure was now very drooping, but still retained, despite its mutilation, much of its original magnificence of design; it altogether still appeared so noble and powerful, that even thus, he seemed a man in whom Michel Angelo might have delighted. His physical charm was less, of course, than it had been in the perfect, strong days of his youth. There were heavy lines about the heavy, clean-shaven, sensitive mouth; and the lofty, massive brow, once so smooth and marblelike, cut in fact with the fine sweeping lines of Greek art, had become somewhat shrunken and furrowed by the constant thought of pain that passed there. However, youth and beauty had not altogether disappeared from Galbraith, and his lustrous brown eyes were full yet of a dreamy light, and able still to flash with sudden fire. It was not difficult to infer from his appearance what kind of a man he was—how earnest, and noble, and large-spirited. True, he had his limitations; a strong individuality cannot escape the reactionary force of

its own nature. But everything about a man like Galbraith is important and suggestive. Body and face, in his case, were both more than ordinarily so. Physically he had been truly grand when in perfect health; yet he seemed still grander as he sat in his exile patiently mastering the agonies of a great suffering. In his countenance was to be seen the rare combination of sweetness with intellectual vigor. Never was carved a finer head or more imaginative brow.

As to character, Galbraith's friends found that the nearer they came to him, the more they saw in him to consider and honor. If on a slight acquaintance a certain restlessness in him made itself felt, a closer acquaintance showed that restlessness to be of a kind which may be called godlike, since it signifies that the human soul in which it dwells is capable of growth; that it aspires always to possess itself of higher thoughts and achievements and hopes. As a result, possibly, of this restlessness, Galbraith gave, even to those who had known him long and intimately, a certain impression of uncontrolled emotions. Yet this was but the momentary self-surrender of the genuine artistic temperament which is in entire sympathy with actual nature, and has fundamentally a sound, rational balance.

There was no suggestion this evening of uncontrolled emotions about Galbraith. He sat very still in the seat he had taken, while his mind was earnestly occupied with the memories crowding in upon it. Among the things now filling Galbraith's mind were many thoughts concerning the work which as a painter he had done and planned to do. He

sought to measure the character of that work and its tendencies, and to determine what qualities of permanent value it had possessed. Galbraith knew that had he been able to pursue his career as an artist, it was very doubtful whether he would have won immediate fame, though fame would without doubt have come to him in time. Had he so chosen, he might have caught the public from the very first. This had been proven by the ready favor accorded several light things he did, just to test his power of pleasing the popular taste. But the career he had planned was something very different from this. His ideal of work had not been to paint so much what the public wanted, but what he wanted; and in the days when he set out boldly on this quest he had felt quite willing to wait long for material results. He had, no doubt, been helped and encouraged in doing this by the extensive knowledge which he possessed of all the best that had been done by both ancient and modern artists. He had loved his art not only in his own hands, but in the hands of others: and he had never had in his heart one grain of envy or jealousy of any other living artist. Even when he had not cared for work in itself, he had always been able to recognize *good work as such*, and to give to it its due measure of appreciation and praise.

Galbraith, of course, as he thought of his work, could only judge it in accordance with what he knew to have been his own purposes in regard to it. A persistent and tireless laborer, he scarcely took time to inform himself of the impression it produced. The men, however, who came closest to

him, in his working days, who stood shoulder to shoulder with him, had, whether they would or not, taken account of what kind of work was his. Whatever he did compelled at once the attention of those who understood such things. His artist friends in Europe used to say that he possessed a wonderful power of defining *the essence* of whatever he painted. Certainly all the work which he then did was recognized as being instinct with passion, supereminent in force. He possessed the rare, individual talent of expressing his own peculiar vision of the world in such a manner as to make it at once a faithful copy of real nature, and a revelation of his own peculiar way of feeling nature. If he ever gave evidence of weakness, if at any time he had seemed to err in his artistic purposes, it was perhaps for lack of suggestiveness in his work. Ever strong and vigorous, his style at times wanted charm. Yet whatever Galbraith's artistic defects, he had succeeded during his short art career in doing what is most difficult and rare: in putting his individual stamp upon his handiwork. The personality of his genius, the mental energy, the passionate force, the tenderness, the greatness of soul which were his—all that which marhed him off and separated him from the men of the present generation—these were displayed in the things he had painted, as no word of his could ever express or suggest. All his life he had dwelt like a star apart, communing with the eternal ideas, and had he been permitted to go forward, working along the lines his genius directed him to follow, he would no doubt have proven himself to be a *creator* of the first and finest order.

In connection with his work Galbraith thought now also of the many outside influences which had been important and helpful to him. More than is usual with artists, he had aimed to make his intellect broad, to feed it on the holy things of this earth, in order that the revelations of nature and of the spiritual world might flow through it as their rightful channel. To accomplish this he acquainted himself with the best in literature as well as in art. The death of Tennyson during the past few months had come to him as a very personal grief, for in all literature the life and work of no one possessed for him the special significance that did those of this man. Browning, as he had often said, was clearly the only poet who had interpreted the artist mind, comprehending it from the inside; but if Tennyson had not done this, he had done more—he had been the consummate, the irreproachable artist—the one who comprehended the heart universal, the passion, the emotion which make the essential life of humanity at its very best. There was undoubtedly something kindred in these two men as artists, though Galbraith was far too modest ever to have thought of such a thing himself. Each was characterized by a stately individuality and by temperamental isolation. Tennyson's distinctive note embodied in: "I shall never see thee more, in the long gray fields, at night" appealed to Galbraith most personally. Then he was one who could rest calmly on the strength of the human will, looking without fear into the eyes of death; and for Galbraith this held a tremendous meaning. His own spirit, his own discontent, his own aspiration, his

own abiding melancholy were expressed by the poet with a fulness, a passionate sincerity, an artistic beauty which he had once hoped he might some day reach in his own work. It was very satisfying to him to feel the sympathy of a soul like that of Tennyson, a man perfectly inflexible in character, pure and manly, able to take his own way and hold it. Only through such a course as this was it possible for Tennyson or any other man to escape from the limits of conventional art into an enlarged, enfranchised art, where "half-gods go" and "whole-gods arrive."

Another influence belonging to the past, which had reached Galbraith of late from the outside world, was that which the death of Ernest Renan recalled. This influence had been for Galbraith purely intellectual, never personal or emotional. With all his charm, Renan lacked entirely that sincere moral earnestness which for Galbraith was so essential to every man. In his Paris days, when Galbraith sought to acquire all the knowledge possible to him outside of the mere province of art, he had interested himself in Renan, then the most brilliant figure at the Collége de France. Renan's splendid imagination, his sensitive mind, and his great literary talent naturally attracted one who was so quickly responsive to beauty of style and fervor of temperament. Galbraith had not failed to perceive, though, that with all his intellect, Renan lacked spiritual insight; and that he was in no sense the prophet that men hailed him. His sentimental vein, his poetic sensibility, made him a great influence among young men in France, and

when Galbraith in his seclusion read of Renan's death, he was greatly moved at losing from the world the personal presence of one who had so stimulated and inspired his intellectual life. He now saw, as he had never seen before, that Renan was far too much of a dilettante ever truly to interpret the moral and spiritual life of man. Yet how delightful had been the charm which emanated from him, and mingled itself with the sweet influences of young manhood; this charm Galbraith could not now repudiate, nor did he wish to repudiate it.

These thoughts, absorbing as they were, passed; and Galbraith's mind commenced to dwell upon Helen. The gloom in the corners of the room had deepened, but the fire before which he sat continued to burn generously and freely; and Galbraith's eyes were fixed intently upon the blazing logs. Poor Helen! He almost spoke the words aloud, so distinctly did they repeat themselves in his own mind. What cares, what disappointments had his affliction brought to her! The thought of this gave him more pain than any of his own disappointments had ever done. He loved her as he had never loved any other human being; his love for her had entirely possessed him as nothing else had ever done. From the very first, love was the one influence which had purified and rescued him from all selfish desire, and led him out into a large, free, exalted state of existence. It had given him faith and courage when everything else failed to do so. He knew beyond questioning that Love is the one great thing—the great need of despairing, hopeless, erring human lives—that it above all other possessions sig-

nifies vitality and strength—and is the measure of a man's real life. Much meditation, much suffering, and the surrender of his own will had made these truths plain to him beyond all misunderstanding. And now, as he sat alone, the shadows of approaching night falling about him, he seemed to see these things anew by the radiance of a clear, white light—the light of his own spirit.

Certainly, anyone who could then have read Galbraith's heart would have found there only what was sweet and holy and true.

For an hour or more he had remained almost in one posture, all about him silent and still, his own thoughts and emotions alone bringing to him a sense of movement of any kind. His fine, massive head sank low on his chest, for a moment or more his eyes closed themselves. The long continued silence of the room was broken by a faint musical sound, almost monotonous at first in its measured chanting; then a voice, soft and low, broke and fell like the sobbing of waves on the beach, intoning the words—

> "Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
> While I am over the sea!
> Let me and my passionate love go by,
> But speak to her all things holy and high,
> Whatever happen to me!
> Me and my harmful love go by;
> But come to her waking, find her asleep,
> Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
> And comfort her tho' I die."

That evening the meadows below the cottage were all mist and music. The frogs and blackbirds both

spoke eloquently of a change—giving promise that the reign of winter was well-nigh over—that the beginning of the end was here.

It had been found proper to provide some place for Helen into which she might go either for rest or work, when she made her weekly trips into New York. Often she was detained there much beyond the time she had expected. Sometimes an art exhibit took her into a remote part of the city ; or an interview with publishers extended itself over a whole afternoon ; or again Mr. Elliott required that she give immediate attention at the office to some matter which could not well be taken over to Jersey and considered according to her own time and pleasure. When it was seen that Helen's work would have such a side as this, Mr. Elliott put at her disposal a small but conveniently arranged room located in a part of the newspaper building quite remote from the other offices. The original suggestion about the room had come from Mr. Westmore, who having seen Helen on her way home after some of her days in the city, was keenly struck by her tired, worn air.

One evening, when Mr. Elliott and Mr. Westmore were in consultation regarding their joint interest, Mr. Westmore turned and said :

"Don't you think, Elliott, you could manage to make a little nest here, somewhere high up, so that it could inconvenience no one, for Mrs. Galbraith ?"

Mr. Elliott never felt quite sure of Westmore in

regard to some things; in fact, he was fast finding him to be rather more inclined to stratagem than his own honest, simple nature approved, and for this reason he now glanced up quickly as Westmore spoke, giving him a penetrating look. But Westmore seemed perfectly willing to meet his eye, and so he merely asked in an interested tone:

"Do you think it necessary, or wise?"

"I make the suggestion," replied Mr. Westmore, speaking most naturally, as he would have spoken of his own daughter, "because I happened to see her two or three times after her day's experience in town, and she seemed so jaded that it occurred to me some such arrangement might spare her, and really at times expedite matters for you."

"Well, yes, I should not be surprised," said Mr. Elliott, "if we might not find it a capital plan. There is that little southeast room, you know, standing quite alone on the next floor and beyond the rear hall; but it is miserably bare and uncomfortable."

"I should like very much to remedy that, if you have no objection. I have a sort of proprietary right in the Galbraiths, you know, and I have a desire to make things a little easier for that poor girl." Apparently Westmore spoke very simply, and very kindly. Mr. Elliott felt that he had no right to doubt his intentions, or even to question them, for after all Helen was Westmore's friend, and had come to him through his intercession. In this way the matter was settled. Westmore took the room in hand, and made of it a most charming and comfortable retreat. After which he adroitly

retired, and the room was handed over to her by Mr. Elliott, who was as pleased in his way that she should have it, as was Mr. Westmore in his.

The privilege of this room had helped Helen over many rough places during the past two months. She both worked and rested there, at all times enjoying a delightful sense of ease and quiet. Mrs. Elliott sometimes came there when she knew she could find Helen. A close personal friendship now existed between the two women. Whenever Helen could spare the time, which, unfortunately, was not often, she would run up to Mrs. Elliott for an hour, so glad was she always to be able to see this one woman friend whom she possessed. At other times Mrs. Elliott made her way to Helen, there in her retreat, in the crowded business quarter; and twice already she had gone so far as the Jersey cottage. At rare intervals Mr. Elliott had also been a visitor in her quiet little workroom; but only when he had changed his plan about some order he had given her, and wished to speak with her personally concerning it. The one other person who came there was Mr. Westmore. His visits had been made very regularly, though he had not remained very long at one time. He generally chose the hour when he knew Helen would be preparing for her homeward trip, in order that he might go with her part of the way, and so prolong his own pleasure. It is very doubtful whether he thought or cared about Helen's feelings in the matter. She had not been able to entirely overcome her natural dislike of him, yet, despite her coldness and indifference, he continued so universally thoughtful of her, that she

could not disregard him. He had in the past few months done so many kind things for her, and in so delicate a way, that it was only natural she should come to look upon him as an unusual man, and even at times to value the attentions and the regard which he bestowed upon her. This could not have been the case, however, had not Westmore controlled himself in the most remarkable manner. Realizing that at first he had made his admiration of Helen too plain to her, he set himself to work to correct this mistake, and did it so well that now he stood on just the natural ground with her which he desired. He came to her retreat whenever he knew she was there; he openly brought her flowers; he talked with her freely of his own plans and schemes; he gave her to understand that he was a restless, unhappy, dissatisfied man; in short, he did everything to arouse her interest in him, and to appeal to her sympathy. One thing only remained to him to do; to get her to accept the fact that she and she only was essential, indispensable to his happiness. What, he sometimes asked himself, if he failed in this? He would not fail, though! He was not the kind of man to fail at the supreme moment.

Helen was extremely weary. She had passed a very busy day, and the afternoon had been spent in finishing up some important copy, for which Mr. Elliott was very eager. As soon as she had completed this work it was sent off by a messenger boy, who took it, according to directions, straight to Mr.

Elliott in his own office. After this, Helen sat down in a cushioned chair by the window, looking out into the narrow, crowded street below. As soon as she had relaxed herself a little she meant to start for home. Alex, she knew, would be longingly awaiting her return; as indeed he was, seated alone in the gathering gloom of evening, absorbed, as we have seen, in thoughts of her. She felt so thoroughly tired, however, that had it been possible she would have stayed where she was and taken her night's rest there. As she thought how delightful this would be in her fatigued state, she yielded to her impulse for rest, and rising, walked over to her couch, and threw her weary body upon it. Ten minutes of sleep would do her a great deal of good, and she was so late anyway that a little more time would not matter greatly.

Not very long after Helen lost consciousness the door of her room opened very softly. Mr. Westmore had knocked, but receiving no reply he tried the door, and finding it unlocked, entered. For a moment he stood without seeing Helen, for the room was only partially lighted by a lamp placed upon the writing-table. When he did perceive her, a peculiar, glad smile leaped to his face. Seating himself near to where she lay so quietly asleep, he proceeded to watch her with intense delight. For ten or fifteen minutes he sat very still—very still indeed. He was too wrought upon to trust himself to make any kind of movement. He felt that for a few minutes he must steady himself and wait. When finally it seemed to him that he had himself under better control, he moved from the chair he

had at first taken, into another closer to Helen. For some minutes he sat there, again very still, yet near enough to touch her had he but reached forth his hand. There he remained watching the sleeper, whose even breathing was the only sound to be heard in the room. At last the sleeper herself stirred; just a little, as one in a dream. Mr. Westmore left his chair and crept to the side of the couch, kneeling over it, breathless. She stirred again, this time reaching upward her right arm. The man kneeling over her caught the extended arm between both of his hands, holding it tightly for a moment against his breast.

"Darling!" He whispered the word, leaning towards her. Again the sleeper stirred, and again the word was whispered over her, yet more intensely. Then, as a woman often does in her sleep, when she has the habit of holding some loved one in her embrace, Helen lifted her arms and placed them about the man by her side.

Somehow, two or more hours later, Helen got back to the cottage in Jersey; but she could never remember just how she had come, or who came with her. The only thing that lingered in her memory of that night's journey was the impression that the meadows below the cottage were all mist and music. The frogs seemed to have set up a general chorus. As the February moon shone forth, she remembered to have thought, that winter, no doubt, was well-nigh over—that this was the promise of a change. Yes, *the beginning of the end.*

BOOK II.

"Thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear: because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away."—JOB XI. 15, 16.

CHAPTER I.

THE winter had passed, and spring, full of its joyous chords, broke upon the earth. May had come, and many people were delighting in it as they never delight in any other season. This month seems meant for enjoyment, and yet all the chords touched by it are not joyous ones. There are days, even in May, when a haze descends upon the natural world, and pensive, serious thoughts are awakened. "The strange, sweet days," are these—some one has said—"the happy, mournful days," when hope seems to lie silent in the heart, and when there is no distinct appreciation of the fact that "the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." To Helen Galbraith there had been many such days this spring. A deep, foreboding shadow rested on the whole earth, taking no account of the fact that it was the time when all things are being recreated. It scarcely seemed possible to Helen that this shadow could ever be lifted and her senses set free to enjoy the fresh, new life which she knew was all about her. She felt this especially one beautiful morning

as she turned from Broadway into Twenty-first Street, with the intention of calling on her friend, Mrs. Elliot. Helen's friendship with Mrs. Elliott still continued and grew; and, whenever it was possible, she went for an hour or two to the quiet, dignified house in Gramercy Park, where she knew the gladdest welcome and sweetest companionship always awaited her. Mrs. Elliott was an exceptionally loving, true-hearted woman, and she had come now to know Helen well, and to love her devotedly. To Helen this friendship had become the one sustaining power of her life. Had it not been given her, at this time, she felt that she could not have taken one more step on the weary way which stretched out before her. And yet she knew she had no right to this friendship. At least, when she looked at it in certain lights, she was convinced of it.

Helen Galbraith had not turned her face away from the evil which had been thrust into her life, as she should have done, and as a year before she would have felt sure of doing. For days after Mr. Westmore, whether she would or not, had taken possession of her, she remained so stunned, so cruelly hurt and wounded, that she could do nothing but lie still and suffer. Of course she should have told Galbraith about it,—yet—how could she? The storm which such a course would have inevitably produced would, without doubt, have resulted in cutting her off from the work she must do. With the breaking of this storm would come an end to her ministrations to Galbraith; possibly an end even to their close relationship. For his sake, this

could not be! In her own life she could suffer anything, but Galbraith must be spared; must have her near him to the end! When she could think clearly of anything, these things fixed themselves in her mind as all that was left to her. What now became of herself was of no consequence. Galbraith and his short remaining life alone were of consequence. As to Westmore, her purpose at first had been never to see him again—never for any reason to speak with him again. When, however, she found herself forced to take up her work along the same lines which she had been following, he gave her to understand that he, and no one else, held the key to the situation; that she must either accept his conditions, or he would say such things to Mr. Elliott as would necessarily close at once her association with the paper. At first a fierce spirit of rebellion had possessed Helen. She must be free! She must save herself! But no, of what consequence after all was she now, but to save Galbraith from need—to serve him to the end of his days! Helen's idea of personal purity had been like that of a flower—once bruised nothing could restore its beauty. Naturally, the belief that she was not worth saving took possession of her; the more she reflected, the more firmly this implanted itself in her mind. The result was she accepted Westmore's conditions, and made a supreme sacrifice of herself, in order that Galbraith's practical wants might be supplied, and his last days secured to him in comfort.

She had chosen a difficult, terrible way in which to walk; and at times she was weary, weary beyond all further effort. The burden which she had

assumed was more than her slight, young shoulders could well bear. With such a weight as this pressing upon her, daily and hourly, wearing away the strength of her body and soul, she had still struggled on, clinging tenaciously all the while to her friendship with Mrs. Elliott. In this she felt lay her only hope. She did not plan to act dishonestly—in her heart she longed to speak—to be frank and honest. But to speak would be to undo the work she had striven so strenuously to accomplish, and in her desperation and her silence she felt she could but cling to this one friend, who seemed to love her and to wish to help her.

As Helen walked along Twenty-first Street this morning, no one meeting her could have failed to notice the extreme pallor of her face, and the great lassitude of body from which she was suffering. Her old dignity was there, but the tragedy of her life had written in indelible lines its story upon her face, which was now beautiful only with a beauty that seemed to have nothing to do with youth, or freedom, or hope. Even rapid walking, and the cool, fresh morning air brought no color now to her soft, well-shaped cheeks ; and her lips did not part with a smile at the sight of a child or a flower, as they had formerly been accustomed to do. In fact, Helen's beautiful face had really become almost painful to look upon ! her outward calm and dignity was only a mantle in which she wrapped a grief too deep and significant to be confided to any one. Helen was well aware of the painful change in her appearance, but this had not the power now to trouble her. A terrible coldness like the coldness

of death had descended upon her heart, reducing it to a state of fixed insensibility; the consciousness of this filled her at times with apprehensions as to her own sanity. Looking about her this morning she saw that the great city was filled with new life, with the rich, glad promise of summer. And yet these things did not move her—seemed in no way to concern her. She asked herself if she was never to get back her innocent, healthy joy in the simple things of nature—would she always remain cold, unmoved like this? As these questions arose in her mind, she felt more desperately alone than she remembered ever having felt before. Not even the sweet and cherished friendship of Mrs. Elliott could be to her what she wished it to be—what it should have been—because, after all, it was a stolen thing to which she had no right. Then again she could not restrain herself from asking the question, if it may not be true that Mercy has its rights as well as Justice? While Helen was putting this question to herself, and deciding in behalf of Mercy, she crossed Fourth Avenue and passed, as she had often passed before without noticing it, Calvary Parish Church. She observed that the door of this church stood open, and stopping for a moment she looked toward it. A long while indeed had it been since she had attempted to pray—to seek any kind of aid other than human aid. It might be a sentimental thing to stop now and to turn into the pretty, vine-covered church; to kneel there for a few moments and pray. Sentimental or not, the spirit moved her to do this very thing, and without questioning herself further, she went into the church and knelt in one of the

pews near the door. At first no words of prayer came to her. Dry-eyed and calm she could only look about the church, which, in the dim, solemn light falling through its beautiful windows, struck her as a very good speciman of Gothic architecture. She seemed to be the only person in the church at this hour. The quietness and solemnity of the place harmonized well with the isolation and despair of her own life. As this thought took hold of her, her imagination was touched, her head fell upon her hands, while her thoughts carried her beyond that place and that hour. It was as if she fell suddenly into a dream, a dream which transported her far away from the world in which she lived, from its harassing cares, its exacting practical obligations, and its unrelenting sorrows. At last, if only for a few moments, she had found a haven of rest for her overburdened spirit.

In her girlhood and first young womanhood religion had been a very vital and personal thing to Helen. Through all the trials belonging to those years a certain unquestioning faith had made all things seem possible to her. But with the failure and disappointments which had come to Galbraith and herself there had come also a weakening of her faith; and her former spiritual convictions had given place to pure moral reasoning. Yet, at times, and especially of late, she was fully conscious that moral reasoning was insufficient for the demands of her life. What could moral reason do for her now? She wanted a spiritual motive, an enthusiasm, which would act as a reviving influence upon her soul, bringing it back to life and to a simple knowl-

edge of God. Though she had honestly aimed to be guided by high motives in the matter of conduct, she had failed wofully. Without doubt, the limitations to which she had reduced her spiritual being had robbed it altogether of any power it might have possessed. Above everything she needed to get back to that abiding human instinct which moral reasoning can never account for, and yet which alone leads men to God and the light. Some such thoughts as these came to Helen as she remained kneeling alone in the dimly lighted church. Her head bowed in unconscious prayer as these thoughts took firm hold of her confused and disordered mind, clearing her vision and bringing back to life certain things which for a long time had been as dead in her. After all, had she not been entirely wrong in seeking to devise means of help out of her own resources instead of accepting the decrees of God? What agony is such a thought! It was too late indeed to retrace her steps, no matter how misdirected they had been! And there was no longer any doubt of it that her steps had been misdirected. She had found the wrong way, and had done her own soul irreparable injury, even though her only aim had been to protect and save Galbraith! This she had been coming to see more and more clearly from day to day; now she saw it fully and in all its broad relations, as it bore upon her own life and upon that of others. What then was left for her? Was she to find hardness alone as the essence of life, and was its iron band to be drawn closer and closer about her heart, crushing out love as well as hope? "*No! No!*" her spirit cried. "*It could not*

be!" Life had once been too beautiful, too full of joy and trust and sweetness, too near to all of God's best things for it to go out in this way, in eternal darkness! Her beautiful head sank into the embrace of her arms, as they rested suppliantly upon the back of the pew over which she knelt, and in the quiet, deserted church Helen Galbraith's voice could have been heard, penetrating the silent naves and reaching to the very altar itself, as she cried out in anguish, "My God! My God! My God!" With that cry the bands that held her a prisoner seemed to snap asunder, and compassion for herself, as great as that which she had felt for Galbraith, swept over her heart. She saw it all now, clearly, unmistakably—her piteous, lamentable error—her wrongly directed purpose—the hideous sin which had wrapped itself about her life, and all because she had allowed herself to drift so far away from God—to love one of His creatures inordinately, instead of trusting Him supremely. "Is there then no help, no means of redemption for me—no way out into the light?" The question fell in distinct tones from her lips. In the silence and stillness of the empty church it had a strange, pathetic sound. And the answer that came to her was the softening, the opening of her own heart, so that she could pray for guidance.

She could not yet ask for much; but she could ask to be delivered, to be set free from the sin which had brought her to a state of spiritual death—which had made of her the woman she now felt herself to be. When she had finished her prayer and lifted her head from its bowed position, there was no great

degree of comfort yet in her heart—only an unbounded pity for herself. And she could pray! this she had demonstrated to herself. As she rose from her kneeling attitude, her eyes fell upon the altar where shone conspicuously a large gilt cross, which seemed to radiate its mystical influence and beauty through the entire body of the church. For a moment she stood gazing at it. Words once familiar came now unbidden to her lips—"There is no salvation of the soul nor hope of everlasting life but in the cross." Repeating the words aloud she turned and walked out into the morning sunlight, a ray of which, falling upon the cross at the altar, had revealed to her its true symbolism as she had never before comprehended it.

"It is a much greater matter than one of mere tact," said Miss Ainsworth, a severe mannered lady of fifty, one of an early morning party in Mrs. Elliott's sitting-room.

"Yes, I quite understand that; but the point I wish to make is, that no amount of feeling or of sympathy, without tactful handling, can accomplish much, where the cases are so diverse, and often so difficult." This reply was made by Mrs. Crenaught, a woman much younger than Miss Ainsworth, more conversant with moden methods in philanthropic work, and altogether a person having a much broader mental horizon.

"Of course," said Mrs. Elliott, "that is very plain, especially when one thinks of the case of Mary Levier."

"I have not heard of that—do tell me!" cried Mrs. Landon, a lauguid looking woman, with large, dark, sympathetic eyes, who had made herself comfortable, a little apart from the others, in a luxuriously cushioned chair, and who, up to this time, had taken no part in the conversation going on about her. Mrs. Landon was never greatly inclined to exert herself, but on account of the genuine sweetness of her nature Mrs. Elliott had great hopes of her, and so had brought her, somewhat against her own wishes, into her little fold of philanthropic workers.

"I shrink from telling the girl's story," said Mrs. Elliott, "for she is so sensitive about it herself that it is like revealing things I have no right to reveal. However, it is such a curious study in human nature, and in human nature at the very point we are interested in it, that I feel I should not keep it back. Mary Levier, as several of the ladies here already know, is a very accomplished servant girl, who was employed for many years in the family of our friend, Mrs. Frank Boyd. Mrs. Boyd's whole household was sincerely attached to Mary. She was engaged to be married to a young mechanic, who seemed to be a young fellow of fine character and energy. For some reason the marriage was delayed from year to year, though Mary and her lover were devoted to each other. Finally, last summer the two went together on a picnic, somewhere up the Hudson River, I believe. After that day the girl appeared to be an entirely changed being. Instead of displaying her usual interest in her work, she became dejected and morbid. Mrs. Boyd noticed this, but I thought it

would in time pass away, as Mary was so essentially sensible. In making inquiries, Mrs. Boyd found out from the other servants that Mary's lover now came every evening, when formerly he had come only once a week. However, it seems, that he never remained any length of time, and Mary scarcely spoke to him unless he coaxed her out to the door for a few words, which always sounded earnest and vehement to those left within. Mrs. Boyd naturally concluded that all of this was only a lover's quarrel, which would in time right itself, and restore the girl to her normal condition. After this state of affairs had lasted some time, Mary came one morning to Mrs. Boyd's room and announced to her that she was going to leave. When Mrs. Boyd had put one or two questions to the girl, she told her the whole trouble —a sad, complicated affair. From the girl's own account she had honestly believed herself in love with her betrothed, and their marriage had been delayed from year to year only that they might be able to start life together in their own home. When they went off on that picnic and found themselves wandering alone in the woods, something—the girl said she could not explain it even to herself—induced her to overstep the line, and to give herself, without further ceremony, to the man she had meant to marry. But the complication was this: Mary came away from that deed with so earnest a hatred implanted in her heart for her lover, that no argument could now induce her to accept him as her husband. Mrs. Boyd found out upon interviewing the young man that he was reduced to a state of the most serious distress because of Mary's refusal to marry

him. But nothing could be done with the girl; marry him she would not—not even when she found out there was to be a child. To add to the trouble, she would not take a cent of money for herself or for the child from the father, nor would she stay longer with Mrs. Boyd. She seemed to feel that she had forfeited all the rights which had formerly been hers. She did allow Mrs. Boyd to help her a little this spring during her sickness, but that is all she will accept. In the mean time, Mrs. Boyd tells me the young mechanic has nearly gone insane from humiliation and grief; yet Mary persists in neither seeing him nor communicating with him in any way. She has taken upon herself not only the entire consequences of her misdemeanor, but she has assumed the maintenance of the child. Now, I want to know," continued Mrs. Elliott, a little pale and excited after the recital of this long and painful story, "how one is to reach and influence the moral nature of a girl like that. From my point of view, Mary Levier, servant girl as she is, has a right to some kind of life in harmony with the demands of her own spiritual nature. But how to make her see this; how to help her to adjust her fine moral sense to the actual and the practical needs of her own life and those of her child; how to do something like this for her—and other women who are striving to straighten out any crookedness that a weak or evil nature has brought into their lives—this is the great question which is always pressing itself upon me."

Mrs. Elliott's home in Gramercy Park had become the meeting place of a certain number of cul-

tured and delightful women, who gathered there one day in each week to talk over some literary subject, in which they all felt an interest. Though most of these women were older than Mrs. Elliott, it was Mrs. Elliott's strong individuality, her strenuousness of purpose, which had brought them together, and united their energies in a common work. The merely desultory and disjointed knowledge of literary subjects, which many of them previously possessed, had, as the result of united, systematic efforts, been formed into something like a connected, comprehensive whole. The minds and natures of the women working together in this way had necessarily expanded under the influence they exerted upon one another. Decided prejudice no longer existed among them ; on the whole they were thoroughly in sympthy with all the great thoughts and movements of the day, as well as eager to lend a helping hand to every kind of work which might aid and advance humanity. With this knowledge of these women Mrs. Elliott had conceived the idea that, during another winter, they should not confine themselves entirely to self-culture, but should aim to combine with it some kind of practical, philanthropic work helpful to themselves as well as to others. Cases like the one of Mary Levier, she thought, might prove interesting and available for them. In a great city like New York, Mrs. Elliott argued, there must be many women, outside of the pronouncedly bad, who, baffled and stunned morally, could be reached in some way. Mrs. Elliott herself did not shrink from contact with the pronouncedly bad. Her

frequent visits to the worst quarters of the city had confirmed her in the belief that a still greater and more intelligent effort was needed everywhere in behalf of the women who were openly recognized as having fallen away from their natural heritage of sweetness and purity. If the other kind of work proved too subtle and elusive Mrs. Elliott was more than willing to take a hand in that which was less complex and perplexing, if coarser and more repulsive. Truly it might be said, she had in herself none of that moral exclusiveness, or spiritual short-sightedness, which mars so often both the beauty and the helpfulness of exalted souls. She possessed, all her friends saw, rare powers of discernment and discrimination. By the exercise of these qualities her sympathies had grown and developed, until she seemed to comprehend the moral problems besetting the unclassed woman of the east side, as well as those which puzzle the refined, delicate woman belonging to her own social order. No doubt Mrs. Elliott's close companionship with her husband had helped to produce in her so catholic a spirit. No woman, with an instinct for kindness, could come long under the influence of Mr. Elliott's strongly human and magnetic nature, without becoming, to a certain extent, a reflection of those qualities which drew him so closely to other men.

"That is a difficult case, I admit," said Miss Ainsworth, taking up the story which Mrs. Elliott had related.

"Yes, but how I should like to see that girl and talk with her!" exclaimed Miss Leland, the very sweetest, most dignified old maid in all the world,

and one who, despite at least sixty summers, still retained many of the graces and enthusiasms of the most ardent girl. "A little tenderness would help Mary Levier more than anything else," added Miss Leland, in a tone which showed plainly what a high valuation she placed upon this gift of tenderness.

"Yes, you are right I am sure," said Mrs. Elliott, "but the girl is so extremely sensitive and shrinking, that any one who approaches her must act most cautiously."

"Now there is a side to this question which none of us seem inclined to look at," remarked Mrs. Wellmead, one of the sturdiest and most faithful of Mrs. Elliott's friends, yet one who thought that all women in these modern days needed to be called back a little, and kept close to the old-time ideal of domestic life.

"There is the man," she said, raising a laugh at once, because her friends knew that she was never willing to have the men ignored or neglected. "No one seems inclined to think of that poor soul whom this girl's sensitiveness, as you put it, or perverseness, as some might call it, has nearly driven to insanity. Is it not a question how much she owes him, as well as herself?"

"Yes, it is a question, Mrs. Wellmead," replied Mrs. Elliott, "and a very important one, I know. But Mary up to this time has been unable to look at that. Possibly, after a little, she may reach that point. However, it will depend very much, I think, upon what kind of development she gets out of her present experience." As Mrs. Elliott spoke, she

stretched out her right hand and placed it upon Helen's knee.

"Don't you think that it is true, dear?" she asked of Helen, turning to her.

"Yes, entirely true," said Helen. "At present, evidently, she can think of no one's suffering but her own."

"Now, Mrs. Galbraith, you are the very person we need," exclaimed Miss Leland. "Do try, some time, in your tours about town, to see this girl. I believe that that Madonna-like face of yours would win confidence from her sooner than all the cleverness of the rest of us combined."

"Oh, thank you!" replied Helen, amid much confusion and embarrassment. "But I, of all people, could have nothing to say to her!"

"You are much too modest, Mrs. Galbraith, much too modest," protested Mrs. Wellmead. "From what I have heard of the beautiful manner in which you have taken up the responsibilities of your own life, I should say that you might have a good deal to say to her."

"Indeed no!" declared Helen eagerly. "I could do nothing for her; I am sure I could do nothing!"

Mrs. Elliott saw that her friends were on the verge of pressing a point which, for some reason, was painful to Helen, so taking hold of the conversation, she carried it on to other subjects.

During the winter months just passed, Helen had often come in upon these friends of Mrs. Elliott's, when they were gathered together for their weekly talks. In this way she had obtained an informal acquaintance with most of them, and she had found

them at all times very interesting women. This morning, however, she, like the poor girl of whom they had, spoken, was more engaged with her own sufferings than with the affairs of other people, and so, when she discovered that she stood no chance of getting a few words with Mrs. Elliott alone, she did not linger. As Helen passed through the lower hall, on her way to the street, Mrs. Elliott's three-year-old little girl rushed after her. This child had come to love Helen and to delight in her as her own special property, and often Helen had found herself wishing that she might bear the little one away to warm and cheer her own home. She clung now to Helen, and would not let her go until she had been lifted up and kissed many times. This sign of love from Helen seemed to satisfy the child's eager little heart, for when at last Helen put her down, telling her that she must run back to the nursery, she was willing to obey and to let Helen depart without her. The longing for a child of her own had taken strong hold upon Helen, and in some indefinable way she had come to associate the pure wifely relation indissolubly with the one of motherhood. This, she felt, had been the great need in her own marriage, the one thing necessary to purge it of all passion, and to give to her a love that was not single and inordinate.

With such thoughts as these stirring in her, Helen came out upon Gramercy Park, so quiet and serene in its aristocratic dignity and seclusion. For the first time this spring, the exquisite beauty of the morning, as sweet and suggestive as the child's smile, filled her heart to overflowing, push-

ing from it for the time being at least all feelings of bitterness and rebellion. She had not time now to linger over the scene, for her work still remained to be done. She walked on rapidly toward the west side, leaving regretfully the delightful old square behind, and it was not long before she reached Sixteenth Street, and turned into Keppel's, being appointed to inspect a collection of etchings then on exhibition there. Helen possessed a true sense of the genuinely artistic, and for this reason she comprehended, with an unusual degree of sympathy, the peculiar beauty and strength of all finely etched work. To her it was the most seductive of the arts, being, despite its limitations, supremely interesting on account of the variety of qualities which characterize it. The very free and personal manner in which the best etchers have always done their work appealed strongly to Helen's love of freedom, to her love of strength and of individual expression. No doubt Galbraith's own inclination toward the etcher's craft had greatly increased Helen's native taste for its results. Galbraith, like most other artists of original genius, had tried his own hand at etching, and his aim had been to strive for distinction as a landscape etcher as well as for such as a landscape painter. In speaking to Helen of the art Galbraith emphasized the possibilities in it for American artists; he saw in etching especially the hope for a future national school. The few powerful, simple lines of the etcher were pre-eminently suited, he would often say, to express correctly the impression which the great American harbors and coastlands give to the eye. Helen had heard a great deal of

talk about these things; she knew very well what men were doing the best and most characteristic work in this line, and she was well prepared to render discriminating criticism on the subject.

There is a delightful atmosphere about Keppel's; and one is certain to see there only the best and most interesting things, either etched or engraved, that can be found in any American place of the kind. Helen always liked to go there, and usually it gave her pleasure to linger over the things she saw. To-day, though she happened upon a really choice collection of etchings by Americans, in which many of her favorites were represented, she had little heart or enthusiasm in going through the exhibit. But as she undertook to do her work honestly, she set herself to the task with courage. A young artist, St. George Turner, an attractive, enthusiastic young fellow, whom Helen had met several times during the past months, was in the shop at the same time. He came over to where she stood and holding up a portfolio which one of the clerks had handed him, he said:

"Now let me show you something, Mrs. Galbraith!"

Helen drew near to the portfolio, in which was placed the priceless treasure which the young man regarded so earnestly, and stooping a little to decipher the artist's name, she stretched out her hand, saying:

"Do let me see it! Poor Meryon! One of the immortals!" and taking the print from Turner's hand, she scanned it with an intensity of observation, which entirely satisfied the young man.

"I see," said he, "that you are one of the initiated. I need not tell *you* anything here."

"Yes," she replied simply, holding the print well off from her, that she might see it to better advantage; adding:

"I can only think with the uttermost pain of the sorrowful, tragic story of that man's life. What a struggle! What a conflict! It is very fine," she added, handing back the print to Turner.

"A splendid imagination is displayed in it," said the young artist.

"Yes, and in its harmony quite at variance with his own broken life." Her voice trembled with emotion; the little print had brought so vividly before her the career of her own husband.

"That remark quite accords," replied Turner, "with what Mr. Hammerton says of him, that 'his work was sanity itself.' It only goes to prove more conclusively how very sensitive and delicate is the genuine artistic temperament; and how, though endowed with splendid power, a man of such temperament, when badly circumstanced, is likely to be utterly worsted in the struggle."

"That is only another way of saying," replied Helen, "that the people of the finest natures seem born to the greatest pain—or that nearly all life of any consequence is mostly suffering." Then she walked away, pale and trembling, while St. George Turner, the healthy young enthusiast, was left staring after her wonderingly, regretting deeply that so interesting a young woman should be spoiled by taking too pessimistic a view of things.

The work of this day was not over for Helen

until she had sought out, according to the remote direction given by Mrs. Elliott, the girl of whom she had heard so much in the morning. Though Helen had said that she had nothing to say to this girl, yet the matter pressed so heavily upon her heart that she could not resist the impulse to seek her out and speak with her. Helen's main thought, however, had been, that the girl might possibly be of help to her—might in some way help her to find the light. When, weary and worn, Helen took her way homeward at a late hour of the afternoon, she was conscious of a change in herself. If this visit had given her no glimpse of the light, it had proven to her that she had not entirely lost her power of helping and comforting others, which was certainly something to be thankful for, to rest upon for the present.

CHAPTER II.

"WELL, Tompson, still in town?" inquired Colonel Clayton, with some surprise, as Andrew Tompson walked into the Manhattan Club. The evening was a delightful one; the very evening of the day through which we have seen Helen Galbraith pass. The windows of the Club were thrown open to admit the delicious May air, which naturally suggested pastures green and other country delights to those held captive within the city's limits.

The Colonel lighted a fresh cigar and looked quizzically over his glasses at Tompson, thinking, as he did so, that the fellow was unusually thin and nervous; and he could not help speculating as to the results of that visit which he and Tompson had paid, in the early winter, to Mrs. Westmore and her daughter. So far as the Colonel could learn, nothing whatever had come of that visit, and for this reason he felt at a loss to understand what motive could have induced Andrew Tompson to seek acquaintance with a family so entirely different in every respect from the set to which he belonged, and to which his conscientiously sustained conservatism had bound him irreparably.

"I cannot understand a cosmopolite like yourself, Mr. Tompson, being in New York at this season of the year," said Willie Andrews, a young man of wonderful personal beauty, who longed to see the

world as it is presented in foreign countries, but who had to content himself with New York because a pitiably small inheritance made it necessary for him to go into business, and so remain an unwilling captive upon American soil.

"Possibly to be a cosmopolite is not such an ideal existence as you imagine," replied Tompson, lighting a fresh cigarette and commencing to pace anxiously up and down.

"I should think to be a cosmopolite the happiest existence in the world," said young Andrews, thinking somewhat ruefully of his own clipped wings, as contrasted with the very free ones of Tompson.

"I can assure you, it is a baleful spirit to be inflicted with, that of the cosmopolite," replied Tompson, pausing and seeming to consider the qualities of his cigarette, as he continued: "To move about the world from one country to another, is to lose, to a great degree, the sense of the sanctity of home and of the absoluteness of the habits and customs of one's own countrymen. While one loses this—and the loss is more than you would imagine—one ends usually by finding all places more or less provincial. In travel you form the habit of comparing things, which gives you a sense of being very broad, but which really means that you come to find life insipid and flat in every country."

"Then you think that the men who remain at home, learning how to be content on a bone, are not such unlucky dogs after all?" asked the Colonel, seeming, in the enjoyment with which he puffed away at a good Havana, to be a most happy reply to his own question.

"Certainly Paris, I should think, with its unequaled brilliancy, could never tire a man of the world like yourself, Mr. Tompson," protested young Andrews.

"Possibly no," replied Tompson, "should I always remain in Paris, and so maintain from one end of the year to the other a purely Parisian point of view. But you see, for instance, after living for awhile in London, upon returning to Paris one feels the contrast, and naturally falls back upon the habit of comparing things. In this way, the enjoyment of all places is lessened for the man who travels extensively and observes intelligently."

"But how delightful, how charming to be able to make these comparisons!" insisted young Andrews, not in the least convinced.

"I have no doubt, Andrews," replied Tompson, speaking in a tone which an older and more experienced man of the world often uses with a younger and less experienced one, "that you get more out of life here, with a week or two at Bar Harbor in the summer, than I do out of the whole of Europe."

"That is the very point—the narrowness of it, and our contentment with it," said Andrews a little testily, provoked that a man like Tompson, who seemed so wanting in appreciation of the fine opportunities which life had brought him, should assume to patronize him, even in the least. "Newport, Bar Harbor, Lenox are all the same," he continued; "the social element is supreme at each place alike, and even a man of the world tires at times of this, and wishes to escape to places equally brilliant yet where purely natural things have a little showing."

"Oh, I grant you," replied Tompson, "that the harmonies and purities of nature have very little chance at fashionable watering places! But I do not think this is more the case in America than in Europe," he added, "and you will find that it all comes down to what I have said—that even Paris, the meeting point of the nations, is essentially provincial. However, to judge, you must know these places from the *inside*," he concluded, using a favorite term of Galbraith's.

Just here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of several men fresh from a day's sport at the sea-shore. Naturally they were somewhat noisy and enthusiastic, and Tompson, thoroughly out of humor now, and feeling at all times very little sympathy for the purely physical pleasures of life, took this opportunity to withdraw. He walked along Fifth Avenue with that restless energy which had of late become so characteristic of him. Tompson's mother even, occupied as she was in dispensing the charities of life, and spending very little time in the company of her son, had come to notice this nervous anxiety which now seemed to possess him. In the hope of obtaining some kind of relief for him, Mrs. Tompson had been urging her son for several weeks to go abroad. But Tompson would not be persuaded; he was determined to remain in New York. He had his own plans, and though he had become nervous and anxious over the great length of time they had dragged themselves along without materializing, his characteristic steadfastness of purpose did not desert him. He knew exactly what he aimed to do and how he purposed doing it. He believed that

he had found a means by which he could, in a measure, control Helen Galbraith and bend her—possibly—to his own purposes. She might, if she was so determined, continue to refuse his love and his assistance, but she could no longer restrain him from baffling her in any other course she might decide upon! This was his decision, and in order to enforce it effectually, he had formed and followed assiduously, during the months gone by, a concisely thought-out plan. This plan was to gain by any means available to him and his assistant all the information possibly to be had concerning Helen's daily private life. The information which he had gained far exceeded in exactness and interest anything he had ever dreamed of obtaining. Tompson's moral consciousness was such that having learned certain things about Helen, he felt himself perfectly justified in spying upon her. If, he argued, she had been weak enough to descend into the pit, where he, Andrew Tompson, felt now assured that she was, no moral law could condemn him for acquainting himself with the whole truth concerning her life, and of using it to bring her to a realization of her true condition. His was a curious, subtle moral consciousness: he was willing to forgive Helen's intimate relationship to Mr. Westmore, if she, on her part, would consent to withdraw entirely from that relationship, and to place herself and her affairs unreservedly under his own direction and control. He knew it was improbable that this could be accomplished, even using liberally the power which he held over Helen—yet it was so impossible for Tompson easily to relinquish any hope he had fixed his heart upon, that he was

determined to make one more fight to gain his end.

Deeply as Tompson was absorbed in a purely personal matter, the habit of observation and comparison was so strongly fastened upon his mind, that even now the general character of the street along which he walked, and the appearance of the various people who passed him by, interested him, and brought him certain reflections. Though many houses were already closed for the summer, he was impressed anew with the brilliant spectacle the street presented, lined on either side by its handsome residences and costly churches. His walk took him southward. At Twenty-sixth Street he paused, and stood looking for a while into the windows of Delmonico's. The old place had many attractions for Tompson, who was something of an artist in the matter of food. The truly regal elegance of many of the modern cafés did not appeal to him. He liked the quiet, dignified places, where the vulgar rich did not much care to go, and where an artistic dinner was more considered than the furnishings of the room, or the apparel of the guests. For these reasons, whenever Tompson wished to entertain a friend, or to indulge himself alone according to his own ideas of food, he always sought Delmonico's, or some of the other old places less known to fame. He now thought that possibly the very wisest thing for him to do would be to go into the dear old place and order for himself a dinner after his own taste. At Delmonico's there was always to be had a famous old champagne, of the house's own importation. This wine Tompson

liked very much, and he thought a bottle of it might clear the atmosphere a little for him. He acted promptly upon the suggestion which had come to him, and must have been perfectly satisfied with the result, since, an hour later, when he returned to the street, no traces of his former irritation could have been noticed in him. The fact was, he had at last determined to take a positive course, and to take it at once: a determination which brought immense relief to his strained nervous system.

"Love, I wish that you would come and walk with me a little under the trees this afternoon." Helen Galbraith placed her hand tenderly upon the brow of her husband as she made this request of him.

"I am quite content as I am, dear," Galbraith replied. "Only, you must not remain indoors on my account."

"I so wish," she pleaded, "that you would come with me a little way. I am sure you would like to feel your feet sink deep in the rich grass along my old roadway. Look, you can see from the window how soft and green it is!" Galbraith looked as she directed him, noting with his discriminating eye what a fresh, inviting spot the old roadway was now. Galbraith's physical strength was far less at this time than it had been during the months just passed, and he knew that he was too feeble to attempt even so short a walk as the one proposed by Helen. Always quick to perceive his every emotion, Helen

saw at once the look of weariness which came into his eyes at her mention of this walk, so, insisting no further, she went out alone to take a little exercise, before nightfall, under her favorite locust trees.

From his seat at the window Galbraith could see Helen as she passed to and fro. To him she was always beautiful—supremely so—but he could not fail to notice that she had grown very thin, and also that she seemed to move with less elasticity and firmness of step than had once been her habit. This condition accorded well with the troubled look which for some time he had been observing upon her face. How painfully conscious he was of these changes in her he scarcely dared to consider; for he felt that it was anxiety and work for him that had brought them to her. Poor, devoted Helen! Little did he realize the strain under which she was living. Nevertheless he understood the situation sufficiently to see that she endured much labor and suffered greatly at times; and to see these things and yet to be compelled to sit there in entire helplessness, unable to alter them, was terrible indeed for him. Nothing which he could now do could lift, even temporarily, the burden which rested upon her young life. But Alexander Galbraith was a strong man, and even in this extremity he did not surrender himself wholly to despair. He could not but hope that Helen might yet find some compensation in life for her present hardships and sufferings, some kind of substitute for the happiness and sweetness, which pain and trouble had driven away from their united lives. This hope brought him some peace—even a hushed kind of joy—yet it, nor any other

earthly thought could now still the infinite yearning of his sorrow-stricken heart. He himself had passed into the realm where no human comfort could avail him much. He and sorrow were linked together for all time.

Forced as he was to spend many hours alone, Galbraith had formed the habit of reciting aloud to himself. The poems which he repeated at such times nearly always suggested his mood. This afternoon there came into his mind Heine's—*The Pine and The Palm*—than which there is nothing so plaintive in all literature. His melodious voice, though greatly weakened, adjusted itself sweetly to the words :

> "A pine tree standeth lonely
> On a far nor'land height,
> It slumbereth, while around it
> The snow falls thick and white.
>
> And of a palm it dreameth,
> That, in a southern land,
> Lonely and silent standeth
> Amid the scorching sand."

As his voice died away and the room fell again into silence, a little house wren came and perched upon the window sill by which Galbraith sat. This little bird burst into such rapturous melody, that it seemed the daring little thing sought to pour forth its entire soul there and then, leaving nothing for a future effort. He watched it with interest, and when its song was ended and it had flown away, he perceived that the fields beyond him were abundant in birds, most of them songsters, mingling their voices in the sweetest music. The scene took hold

of Galbraith's imagination, and his thoughts wandered to those far-off days in the life of poor Heine, when, as a child by the banks of the Dussel, he had listened to the secrets of the birds in his favorite haunt among the green alleys of the Schlossgarten.

This afternoon Helen was not content to limit herself to her usual walk under the locust trees. An uncontrollable restlessness possessed her; her mood demanded something large and free; so passing beyond the grass-grown road into the regular thoroughfare, she struck out across the inviting slope which stretched away from the cottage, ending in the meadows below. She walked across the fields now eagerly, feeling a sense of triumph in the spaciousness and immensity of the broad, rolling country. The birds to which Galbraith was listening made music for her also; and though her thoughts were sad ones, and the consciousness of her own ruined life was heavy upon her, she could not refuse to see and feel the beauty of the landscape. The thought came to her, as she paused, looking about, that no matter how fully one realizes in a spiritual sense the richness and peculiar beauty of nature's living tints, no language is ever adequate to convey to others just the impression which these things have made upon the mind. If this is true of the spoken word, she mused, which by virtue of its natural endowment everyone can use more or less discriminatingly, how despairingly true of his brush must it not be for the landscape painter. A bevy of barn swallows swept silently above the slope on which Helen stood, soon becoming lost to sight behind the wooded heights to the west of the cottage.

She wheeled about instinctively to watch their rapid flight; as she did so, the brilliancy of the afternoon sky caught her eye and held it. Across the broad expanse of meadows a man on foot moved noiselessly and rapidly; in a few minutes more he was at Helen's side, and his voice in her ear caused her to turn and face him.

"You come as noiselessly upon the scene, Mr. Tompson," said Helen smiling slightly, "as a magician would." Both recognized that their relationship was slightly strained, but as Helen had no desire to quarrel with her husband's friend, she tried to be as pleasant in her manner to him as possible.

"I came straight across the meadows," he replied, "but you were looking in the opposite direction, and so did not see me."

"Yes, I had just turned," she answered, "to watch the flight of some swallows. They went by with the most remarkable and rapid flight. Did you notice them?"

"Yes, but only carelessly. I was much more taken up with watching your absorbed interest in them."

Helen disregarded the personal note which Tompson used in saying this, and replied naturally:

"Yes, I *was* absorbed for the moment in those swallows. I was thinking of how direct and swift they are—and yet how silent."

"Swallows have no song, you know," he said, "but they have little clinking notes which some people, I believe, find not unmusical."

"They must possess much feeling and much

energy to fly as they do," she said, looking up the slope in the direction which the birds had taken. "I should think that swallows, with that dashing flight of theirs, were less in need of song than most other birds."

"Why do you say that?" asked Tompson.

"Because," she answered, "their flight must express, even better than song can, any strong emotions which they may have."

"Then you believe more in actions than in words?" he asked, eager to think it so, in the hope that his own persistent silence of late, enforced by his tireless activity, might have what he considered its just reward.

"Of course I do," she said positively, looking at him with one of her penetrating gazes before which he could not stand without a slight wincing.

"Have I ever talked much about all the things which have befallen me?" she asked, looking even more searchingly, as she put these words to him, into his clear-cut, cynical face.

"No, I only wish that you had!" he replied.

For the moment Tompson was embarrassed, and his nervousness seemed to return upon him. He stooped and tore up a few blades of grass, and, twirling them about his fingers, was more at his ease again.

Helen stood a little above him on the slope of the hill; she was very grave and white, and as he looked up at her, waiting for her answer, she had never seemed so far removed, so entirely beyond him. Tompson understood very well that a mistaken spirit of self-sacrifice had betrayed Helen into her

error;—though he might accuse her bitterly in words, he knew that in reality she had not sought sin from any low or degraded motive. She was as far beyond him still—even while he was in full possession of the most damaging facts concerning her—as she had ever been. The more fully he realized this, the more he longed to grasp her and pull her down to his own level; to break her, if need be, upon the wheel of his own petty revenge. He waited for some moments for her to answer him, but she remained stately and silent, still looking down upon him. Andrew Tompson could never endure being treated indifferently or contemptuously. He had come to Helen in the spirit of reconciliation; chance had thrown them together in the fields; there was no need for him to go on to the cottage and to make any kind of pretext to Galbraith; without doubt this was the time for him to speak. He twirled the blades of grass which he held, making a supreme effort to control the nervousness which had come upon him. He was determined to command himself and to speak to Helen the plain truth. Tompson had always about him a relentless quality, which often made Helen think of cold, hard steel. She thought of this now, as he stood before her, shaping her destiny. A moment or two longer he waited for some word from her, but none came. Then, quick and agile as a young tiger, he leaped forward and grasping her hands he held her with a firmness of grip which she had not thought possible to his apparently delicate muscles.

"Helen! Helen Galbraith!" he almost hissed his words in her face. "Do you know that I hold your

honor and your soul literally in the palm of my hand, as I now hold these resisting hands of yours in mine?" She had stepped rapidly backward in order to repel his approach, and in so doing she dragged him after her, to a further rise in the sloping ground. As she did this, the gray roof of the cottage came into view, and realizing at once that a further advance in that direction would bring them within range of Alex's window, Helen halted. She saw that she must stand still and hear what Andrew Tompson had to say.

"You say a very strange thing to me—how is it true?" she asked. Helen's quick intuition told her that he knew what he was talking of, and, by nature honest and truthful, she had no thought of protecting herself by denial or equivocation.

"I do not propose to tell you *how* it is true," he replied measuredly. He was in complete control of himself now, and his intellect seemed sharpened by the contest in which he had engaged. He relaxed somewhat the tightness of his hold, as he went on speaking.

"I know certain things about you which it would be painful to relate in detail; things which are very damaging to you. I suppose you understand me?" He paused a moment.

"Go on!" she said. Her voice had sunk almost to a whisper, but her eyes were fastened upon Tompson, and he felt that he must speak at once and briefly, otherwise his nervousness might soon return beneath that penetrating look of hers.

"If I must explain, then I will tell you that your

secret and immoral connection with Mr. Westmore is all known to me. You need not deny!" he interposed, feeling her hands close tightly over his own.

"You have taken a very foolish step, Helen," he continued, "to say nothing of the wickedness of it. With this, however, I have nothing to do—wickedness of that kind is far too subtle a thing for me to presume to analyze it. I am here to deliver you from the foolishness of it, if you will listen to me." He spoke eagerly now, coming to the main point he had before him. "What, in the long run, I wish to know, can Westmore possibly do for you?" His voice was almost fierce as he asked this question, but the only reply which Helen gave him was to repeat her former words, still looking him directly in the face.

"Go on!" she said.

"Westmore is a married man," he continued, "and any hold you have on him will avail you very little. Now, Helen—" as he spoke her name his voice fell, becoming almost soft. To be just to him, this love which Tompson had for Helen was the best kind of love which he had ever known, and in its behalf he felt that he was now about to make a splendid sacrifice of himself. "Now, Helen," he repeated gently, if not tenderly, "I can look into your future, and it is very dark, very gloomy. But I love you—yes—I love you—despite everything." He paused again, but she said nothing, only continuing to look steadily at him, so he went on. "I want you to get out of this—to get out of it at once. Let Westmore and the Elliotts and journalism and

the whole complication go—let them go to the ends of the earth—*only you get out of it*—and—" he paused again—he had now come to his main point—he was about to play his highest trump—as he spoke he looked squarely into Helen's face, meeting unflinchingly her own steady gaze. "And," he continued, "let them go—then *come to me!*" Another pause. "And after awhile, when everything is over, I will marry you!" As he finished speaking, he congratulated himself that he had played a very brave and magnanimous part, and that no man could rise above him in the sacrifice he was willing to make of himself. His former fears of failure receded, and he became quite hopeful of the final success of his plan. Why should it not be so? Certainly he had not believed that Helen would ever stand still as she had done and listen, without a word of protest, to what he had just said to her. He was not deceived very long, however, for, as he finished his last word, something like real fire sprang into her passionate, dark eyes, so intensely vivid and strong that it seemed to leap forward, striking him directly in the face. He had seen such a look as this upon her face once before, but now it was much more real and terrible to behold. It was a look, also, that remained, becoming a veritable, living fire, burning there in her eyes, leaping forward again and again and blinding him so that he loosened his hold of her and staggered back a step or two down the slope. As Helen freed herself from him, and stretched forth her arms with a sense of liberty, her voice seemed to return to her. Slowly her words came—uttered in a low, broken tone, but

with unmistakable distinctness and intensity. She too had something to say.

"And you, Andrew Tompson! You have called yourself the friend of Alex Galbraith! You, who spy upon his wife, the wife whom you pretend to love! You find that for motives of her own—I will not say what these motives were—she has ruinously sacrificed herself—and you come to her to save her, as you say! In doing so, you not only tell her that you are an abominable traitor, but you even more fully reveal yourself, by offering to still further degrade her; and then—as if you had not already heaped scorn upon scorn—you insinuate that when her husband, *your friend—the friend of many years!* the one for whom she has in deep, mistaken devotion sacrificed herself—that when he is dead and well out of the way, you will make everything all right for everybody concerned by marrying the poor wife that is left!"

"Helen! Helen!" he piteously cried. "Do you not see that I love you? That I condescend to *anything* that I may save you, that I may call you my own?" A fierceness seized him and springing forward he sought a second time to obtain hold of Helen's hands. She drew aside quickly, but as she did so, Tompson fell forward, striking his palms against a pile of stones heaped together in the fields. Though somewhat hurt and considerably shaken Tompson pulled himself up speedily; but in the meantime his anger had risen, and the reply which Helen now gave him seemed only to increase it in a large degree.

"I can only see," she said, "that you are a mean,

contemptible, false man, who, beneath a cultured exterior, conceals a thoroughly narrow and selfish soul. And had not my poor husband been guilelessly honest and pure, he would have seen the same long ago."

Her manner was entirely quiet and dignified, but Tompson's anger continued to increase in violence, and so great did it become, that his refined features appeared distorted and drawn.

"Then I am to understand," he said, his voice now sharp and rasping, "that you refuse my offer?"

He was very angry—very angry indeed, but Helen felt no fear of him. Looking him unflinchingly in the eyes, she replied:

"Yes. I refuse. Now and for all time."

Her words were as distinct and measured as she could make them.

"Then you will regret it," he answered fiercely.

"Possibly, though I do not see how, so long as I continue sane."

"There are many ways by which a determined man may reach his end," he replied, putting a constraint upon his manner.

"Perhaps," she answered, "if that man is a fiend."

"Perhaps!" he replied, turning from her, and walking down the slope. As she stood watching him pass out of sight, the early twilight of the evening fell upon the field; a sweet odor filled the air; but Helen was no longer conscious of these things—her mind was consumed entirely with the thought that the great crisis had at last come, and that she must find the strength with which to meet it honorably and frankly.

CHAPTER III.

"I AM quite tired out this afternoon, my dear," said Mr. Elliott, as he came into his wife's sitting-room and threw himself upon the lounge. Mrs. Elliott was occupied this afternoon over a bundle of fresh, white dimity which she was shaping into a simple morning-dress for herself. She had a special fondness for cool, light fabrics, and she often employed her spare hours in making such fabrics into gowns for herself. The art of sewing seems especially to become some women. Mrs. Elliott was one of these women, and so her husband thought, as he looked at her.

Mrs. Elliott, it might be said quite safely, was no less pure and fair to look upon than was the snow-white, delicate fabric upon which she was at work. Sweetness of character was the quality which her face expressed most distinctly. Something about her always won the confidence of people, and made them feel that they could rest their cares and their sorrows with her. To her husband she had been for many years the sole refuge from all the anxieties and worries which his daily work brought into his life. This afternoon, being thoroughly weary, he had laid aside everything and come to her.

"I wish very much, that you would go away for a little holiday, dear," she said in reply to his words;

then putting aside her work, she went over to him, and took a seat by his side.

"Not yet—it is impossible," he said. "This is the time of the year when it is most difficult to hold things together. The public becomes easily demoralized in these soft, delicious May days—it cares nothing about politics or the serious business of life. But I am sure I don't blame the public, for the seashore and the fields and the woods are far too alluring now for men to stay at home occupying their minds with all sorts of socialistic problems."

Mrs. Elliott had seated herself on the edge of the couch upon which her husband lay stretched at full length, and as he spoke she pressed her delicate, slender fingers over his broad, well shaped brow. Mr. Elliott's face was distinctively an intellectual one, with much of the Puritan firmness of purpose and purity of character stamped upon it; a face expressive of everything that is strong and manly.

"I wish, dear," she continued, still stroking her husband's brow and temples, "that you could give up the management of the paper as a whole, and do only editorial writing. I am sure that it would suit you much better, and the strain would be far less."

"No, I like being at the helm," he replied. "I like to steer the thing according to my own ideas. I am not good at following. It even keeps me wrought upon all the time to think that Westmore's money is at the back of me."

"But Mr. Westmore allows you perfect freedom, does he not?" she asked.

"Yes—perfect," he answered, "so far as my general policy is concerned; but, my dear—I must

say it—I am developing a genuine dislike for Westmore. Somehow, the fellow leaves a bad taste in my mouth. He's entirely too sharp and eager."

"You do not think he is dishonest, do you?" asked Mrs. Elliott anxiously. She had never had any personal liking for Westmore, but she knew that it was wiser, so long as her husband and he remained associated in business, to adopt an unquestioning attitude toward him.

"Well, no, not just that, my dear—I cannot say that of him," replied Mr. Elliott. "But to me it is something even worse than bare dishonesty—something far more subtle. However, do not let us talk of him now. For the immediate present things must remain as they are. Speaking of my going away," Mr. Elliott went on, in a half-playful, yet very tender tone, "I begin to think that it is quite time for my little girl and the babies to be getting out of town. Now what do you think?" Mr. Elliott rested his broad, muscular hand upon his wife's shoulder as he spoke to her, drawing her a little closer to him.

"Yes, it is time, I admit," said Mrs. Elliott, "and for the sake of the children I suppose I cannot delay much longer; but I wish that I might stay, dear. For once, I do not wish to go quite yet."

Mr. Elliott noticed that his wife spoke anxiously, and that an expression of pain came now to her face.

"Why, what is it, dear—what is the trouble?" he asked earnestly.

Before replying, she looked down at him, pressing her hands very lovingly over his brow;—then she said, quietly and sadly:

"I am troubled about Helen Galbraith, and I do not like to leave her—not just now."

"Have you seen her very recently?" Mr. Elliott asked.

"Yes—only a few days ago—she stopped here in the morning. I had several of my friends with me at the time, talking over some of our plans for future work, and so I had no personal conversation with Helen, but she struck me as looking especially ill and worn. In fact, there was something almost tragic about her." Tears came to Mrs. Elliott's eyes as she spoke of Helen, who, struggling so bravely amid all her cares and disadvantages, had become very dear to her.

"I too have been struck with her ill, altered appearance. Yet what can we do?"

"I don't know—but I do wish there were something! Something!" exclaimed Mrs. Elliott fervently—adding:

"You do not know, dear, how fond of her I have become. She appeals to me so!"

"She is undoubtedly strangely beautiful," said Mr. Elliott, "and for some reason she seems to have become as strangely tragical in appearance. She came to my office the other afternoon, the afternoon of the day she was here, no doubt, the same on which she got together that bit of work about Keppel's Spring exhibition, and, really, something about her alarmed me. Her manner was quiet and reserved, but her face was as pale as a dead face. Her eyes had a startled, wild expression, and altogether she looked to me like a person who is bordering upon a serious illness. I fear sometimes," Mr. Elliott con-

tinued, after reflecting a moment, "that the work is too heavy for her; and yet she is always urging me to give it to her—to let her go here and there—and when I grant her request, she goes at the work as if it were the only thing in the world which she really enjoyed."

"Yes, that does seem true," said Mrs. Elliott, "but only so, I am sure, because, it helps her to turn for the moment from the great sorrow which stands immediately before her. But she is too young for *this* to be all of life for her!"

"I wish sincerely that we could do something to help her."

"I have never had any one so much on my heart." After a moment's pause she asked:

"What do you think, dear, of a little excursion this afternoon—out into the country, to see her—are you too tired for it?"

"Why, no! I believe that it would be the very thing," answered Mr. Elliott, stretching his limbs to ascertain exactly what was his physical state. "I am determined, anyhow, to give myself a holiday for this afternoon. My work is all up, and I am not going back to the office until to-night. An hour or two in the country and a breath from the fresh fields would rest me much more than lying here all afternoon. So come, let us go!"

Mr. Elliott's boyhood had been passed amid country surroundings, and many years of close city life had affected very little his genuine love for out-of-door things. If they had affected it at all, it had been only to increase this love, and to cause him to yearn for a more frequent contact with the

natural world than his present life permitted. It was with genuine delight that he took the short walk across the Jersey meadows to the Galbraith cottage. The afternoon was unusually fine, and the sky, Mr. Elliott remarked, seemed to him bluer and the fields greener, than he had ever seen them anywhere.

"That is because you have been so long shut in between brick walls," replied his wife.

"This is delicious!" said he, standing still and removing his hat, that the fresh, cool air might bathe his brow. May, with all its bloom and sweetness was filling the earth with a ravishing joy.

"There seem to be birds everywhere," continued Mr. Elliott, "and birds of every type, as if they were out on a grand holiday."

"This is a wonderful time!" said Mrs. Elliott.

"Indeed it is, a wonderful season,

> 'When all the world is young, lad,
> And all the trees are green.'"

He looked about delightedly; on every side beauty met his eye.

"It is the old, old story," he went on saying,

> '"Life still ebbs away.
> Man is ever weary, weary,
> Waiting for the May.'"

It was yet early afternoon, and Galbraith had not taken his seat at the window. He half reclined in a comfortable chair, while Helen, seated upon a stool

at his feet, read to him. The windows of the room were open on all sides, and the fresh spring air and sweet odors from the out-door world came in to them refreshingly. Galbraith followed Helen's reading with interest, yet it was evident that he was weary, very weary. He had been passing through an exceptionally bad week; his appetite was indifferent, and the ability to sleep had nearly gone from him. He showed most painfully the effects of this strain under which he had been sustaining life. Moreover, his soul was heavily burdened. The great change in Helen impressed him more and more distressingly from day to day. That she never complained, but watched with untiring anxiety for every desire of his, that she might minister to it at once, made things none the less easy for him to bear. At times the conditions of his life and hers seemed to wring the very heart out of him. He could no longer speak freely to Helen of the many perplexing thoughts which clouded his mind and wrapped his soul in darkness. He dared not trust himself to speak, to arouse to active expression the terrible grief concerning which he knew Helen was constantly fighting to keep silent. Living in such an atmosphere as this, it had come about that they read together more frequently than in former days. This, without demanding much personal talk, gave them a means of close, personal intercourse; it helped and soothed them both—and often the thoughts which they expressed over their books contained some individual word, comforting and sweet to think upon, which otherwise might never have been spoken.

Mr. and Mrs. Elliott came across the meadows and up the slope to the plateau on which stood the cottage. The door, as well as the windows, was thrown open to admit the soft May air and sunshine. Without announcing themselves, the two visitors stepped quietly over the threshold, and stood before Helen and Alex. To see them was a picture one could never forget :—Galbraith half reclining in his easy chair, Helen seated at his feet, slowly turning the leaves of a book, her sweet voice filling the room with a low, sorrowful melody. For a moment Mr. and Mrs. Elliott stood very still, looking at the two solemn figures before them. Galbraith was the first to see the visitors, and the expression which came to his face caused Helen to turn. Springing to her feet, she extended both her hands in welcome, her pale, beautiful face enveloped by the happiest smile that had come to it for many weeks. Mrs. Elliott was already well known to Alex, for she had found her way hither a good many times during the past few months ; but Mr. Elliott had never seen him before. It had long been the cherished desire of Helen's heart that these two men should meet, but of late she had come to fear that Galbraith's life might slip away before this could be accomplished. Now, at last, the thing was done, and without any planning on her part !

"This is a glad moment, Mr. Galbraith !" said Mr. Elliott earnestly. He placed his hands upon Galbraith's shoulders as he spoke, for he felt that he must touch this man, who looked to him so like a god dethroned and robbed of his rights.

No passage of time could ever accustom Galbraith to the loss of his arms, and never, perhaps, did he feel this loss more keenly than when he longed to grasp another man's hand in his own. How insufficient he felt himself now for this new friend, his heart responding with all its force to his fine, full manhood, and to the sincere earnestness of his words, unable even to clasp his hand! Though Galbraith could not know it, his eyes held Sherman Elliott, and conveyed to him the state of his feelings more convincingly than a mere grasp of the hand could have done. Galbraith had wonderful eyes, and even the ravages of disease could not take that marvelous light out of them, which at times seemed to be nothing less than the flash of a divine inspiration.

The two men fell naturally into sympathetic conversation. Though Galbraith had so long withdrawn himself from all active participation in matters pertaining to the outside world, he yet felt for such matters a deep interest, and many of them he followed with close and discriminating attention. It was therefore a great pleasure to him to exchange thoughts with a man like Mr. Elliott, who was alive to all the higher interests of civilization, and who was exerting his own fine gifts to help in the best way the advancement of these interests.

"Now as to a well sustained seriousness of purpose," said Galbraith, carrying forward to its legitimate conclusions the subject upon which he and Mr. Elliott were speaking, "it is the one great essential of all work which is to have any permanent results; and that, it seems to me, is what the

American character is unwilling to shut itself up to."

"We are undoubtedly," replied Mr. Elliott, "a people of indefensible impulses; and it is certainly true that few people in America, even among those who profess to love both nature and art, have cultivated themselves with any kind of well sustained seriousness of purpose."

"We Americans have a rooted belief in instinctive knowledge, or knowledge by absorption," continued Galbraith. "A keen, sensitive, catholic feeling for works of art cannot spring into being full-grown, with a perfect control of all its powers, as many of our worthy citizens are inclined to believe; it must be developed. The best way to foster and develop such a feeling is to have our eyes opened by learning all we can from books and pictures, from science and art. Out of universal knowledge like this, special knowledge will the more readily emerge. A true knowledge of beauty comes to no people who have not laid for it a broad and deep foundation."

"Everything artistic in America is looking up tremendously though, I am sure," replied Mr. Elliott. "In painting and sculpture, in architecture and landscape gardening, everywhere there is a distinct advance. I am no artist, or art critic, but I am deeply interested in these matters, and I make a point of observing their progress and helping it on all I can. The process of development will be slow here as it has been in other countries—possibly slower in America than it has been anywhere else—because the American is too eager for results, and he tries to circumvent nature by a plan of forcing. Of

course, he gets an artificial result, and has the trouble also of going again over all his work, having found that he must submit himself unflinchingly to the unvarying laws of nature."

"In the summer of 1883," said Galbraith, walking up and down the floor according to his custom when thoroughly interested in his subject, "there was held in the rue de Séze in Paris the most notable exhibition of pictures ever held in that city of many notable exhibitions. It was a wonderful collection—unique and memorable, unprecedented then, impossible to-day, I believe. It was a collection of the most celebrated paintings then owned in Paris. In one gallery were assembled eighty of the choicest paintings of the greatest period of modern art. They expressed the quintessence of the art-spirit of France—and it was an event which will never be forgotten by Parisians, I am sure, nor by anyone else who shared in it. The impressions which it produced upon the younger artists, like myself, were powerful and manifold. But chief among these impressions, I remember, was the one impression of what this collection meant as *a whole.* I thought of no one picture so much as I thought of the generations of men untiringly devoted to artistic efforts, to that steadfast artistic purpose which had been required to make such an exhibition possible, even in the art center of the modern world. Now, if America could take to heart such a great object lesson as this," continued Galbraith, "and be content to abide her time—to work out, according to the laws of nature, a national art—using all her vast possibilities slowly and wisely—what a

result we might have!" Galbraith was thoroughly aroused now, he had touched the subject of all subjects most calculated to awaken his sleeping powers. The extreme weariness of body, which had so impressed Mr. Elliott when he first caught a glimpse of him reclining in his easy chair, had for the moment given place to an excited, overwrought energy, and striding up and down the room, his noble head thrown back, his eyes flashing with the enthusiasm which stirred the very depths of his being, he looked like an inspired prophet.

Mr. Elliott recalled a saying of Dr. Holmes that "the value of a poet to the world was not so much the pleasure this or that poem might give to certain readers, or even perchance to posterity, as the fact that the poet was known to be one who was sometimes rapt out of himself into the region of the Divine; that the spirit had descended upon him and taught him what he should speak." He thought of this now. He saw that Galbraith's nature was an unspeakably rich and deep one, and that all this richness and depth he burned to give open-handed and open-hearted to the cause which had been the absorbing interest of his life. Galbraith's most distinctive quality from boyhood, when the sense of beauty had been first born in him, was the irrepressible longing to give himself in some way—to share his thoughts and emotions and activities with others, therefore it was natural that he should speak openly and strongly of the things which had made life to him so interesting and so important. Besides, it was now the only thing left, the only thing which he could do; and the intensity of a last resort, of a final

purpose, could be felt in his words and in the tone of his voice. When he was deeply moved and spoke unreservedly his innermost thoughts, it made a tragic moment for himself and his listeners, conveying to the latter a sense of its inevitability, something ordained of God to be as it was.

"Are we as a nation," continued Galbraith, keeping up his walk, "capable of the tremendous self-denial, the resignation to daily discouragements which are needed to carry a people through the sublimating period when its finer taste is being shaped and fixed to meet the highest standard? Sometimes I think that we have not this power of self-denial, and that we may never have it. A people can gain their spiritual light, their guidance up to the heights, only from the lives of their prophets. A great national art can be created and infused into the life of a people by masters alone, masters taken from among themselves, who, being a part of the people's life, can interpret to them essential truths, make plain to them obscure points and cause the barren places to blossom and glow with beauty for them, as no genius, but one born and bred amongst them, can possibly do."

Mrs. Elliott and Helen had drawn near to Mr. Elliott as Galbraith spoke, and the three sat together watching him with breathless interest, eager for his words, yet anxious over the excitement which showed itself in his manner and voice. Yet not even Helen dared to interrupt him. No matter how excited he might become she knew it was wiser to let him have his say out. Pausing for a few minutes Galbraith came and stood by the table on which books and

magazines were piled; he leaned against it slightly, as if unable to stand longer without some support; his look wandered out of the open windows, across the fresh, green fields. He continued very slowly and impressively, as one who sees a vision.

"When I think of that brotherhood of men—of martyrs I might say—of Delacroix, Rousseau, Dupré, Corot, Diaz, Millet, Daubigny, and the others—when I think of how this little group marched hand in hand for years, combatting in their personal careers the worst forms of poverty and neglect and suffering, and yet pursuing unflinchingly their way, as only heroes can—waging the fiercest, most determined kind of battle against a whole world of sleek mediocrity in art;—when I think of their determination to conquer or to die, and of how through persistency of purpose they won the fight and not only drew after them in the glory of their achievement the French nation, but the whole modern art-world; when I think of these things and see that it was not so much what we call genius but character which won the battle, I almost despair of the permanent establishment of a great school of American art."

Galbraith paused—his voice had become low and pleading, his eyes still resting on the fields. His three listeners sat very still, not daring yet to interrupt him. For a few moments perfect silence was in the room; then turning his gaze towards Mr. Elliott, he went on, in a less excited and more personal tone.

"The trouble is," he continued, "art in America is looked upon as a business—is considered as a

means to wealth and social distinction; and I might say exactly the same of literature. But this brings us back to that old principle from which we can never escape,—that it is impossible to serve God and Mammon. Art must be looked upon as an end in itself, worthy of all one's soul and heart and intellect. Unless our American painters can be brought to look upon it in this light, we can have no great art, giving to the common facts of daily life a strange, new interest and a transfigured beauty. Everything depends on the spirit with which we approach a subject."

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Elliott, "the key to every situation we carry in ourselves; our work only gives us back what we seek."

Evidently Galbraith's talk had done him good. He went back to his easy chair and took a seat near the window, his face wearing a look of contentment and satisfaction such as Helen had not seen there for a long while.

"Yes, that is one of our great truths—especially so in nature, which never fails to reflect back to us what we ourselves are. It reminds me of an incident," continued Galbraith, a delightful smile playing pleasantly about his face, "told by some one—Story, I think—of a friend of his, who was a charming man and a true poet. He was returning home one splendid moonlight night in early summer along a country road, his spirit filled with the mysterious beauty of the scene, when he heard the rattle of a cart coming down the same road. Looking up, he recognized the butcher of the village, and as he passed he greeted him with, 'Good even-

ing, B——' adding out of the fulness of his heart, 'what an exquisite night!'—'Yes,' was the butcher's reply—'fine night for slaughter.'"

"People, I find," said Mr. Elliott, "are talking a great deal to-day, Mr. Galbraith, about the subject-matter of a picture—whether the observer should be able quickly and easily to comprehend it or not. What have you to say of that?"

"Yes, I know," replied Galbraith, "they are saying that with their eagerness to be readily understood some painters are carrying their work into the province of literature."

"But this immediate comprehension of the subject,—what relation has it, do you think, to the real value of a picture?" asked Mr. Elliott.

"Oh, it is a warfare, I think," said Galbraith, "over a non-essential! Still it is wiser not to push your subject-matter too far. Art is too subtle a thing for that; and besides, in people highly gifted with a sense for beauty, emotion is supposed always to precede reasoning. It is taken for granted that such people are endowed with that intuitive feeling which enables them to comprehend art."

"Yes, but the majority of people are much more inclined to abstraction and analysis than to emotion and intuitive feeling. What are they to do about understanding a picture?"

"It seems to me," replied Galbraith, "if the artist fulfills his mission, this matter will take care of itself. The artist's preeminent duty is to paint true. His business is to see what there is in what he wishes to paint—then to reproduce the truth as he finds it. If this is done conscientiously and per-

sistently and discriminatingly, pictures, I believe, will speak for themselves—and we shall not hear much more discussion about what consideration is to be given to their subjects."

Here Mrs. Elliott and Helen joined in the conversation, leading it away from serious themes. Then Helen arranged with Jane for some tea and cakes, after which Mr. and Mrs. Elliott took leave. Helen went out with Mrs. Elliott and the two men were left alone for a moment. Again Mr. Elliott approached Galbraith and placed his hand on his shoulder. For a few moments they stood together looking into each other's eyes with confidence and admiration.

"Is there nothing I can do for you, my friend?" Mr. Elliott finally broke the silence by saying. For a moment Galbraith did not reply. Then he said:

"Yes—one thing—see after Helen!"

"I will!" came the reply, ringing firm and true like a pledge which Galbraith felt he could rely upon.

For a moment or two after Mr. Elliott had left Galbraith, the latter continued to stand in the center of the room.

"Thank God—they are good!" he said aloud. "And he—*he* is great!" Having uttered these words he moved over to his chair and falling into it, shut his eyes and gave himself up to an overpowering weakness.

The site upon which the cottage stood was quite elevated, commanding a splendid view of all the surrounding country, but the ground belonging

distinctly to the cottage was less than an acre in extent. By degrees, during the three years that the Galbraiths had lived there, Helen had found the means to get this house-lot fashioned into something like a garden, planted largely in flowers. This had been done in the hope that it might furnish both interest and enjoyment to Galbraith. At first he showed an interest in it, but now he seldom went beyond his front door, and Helen continued the cultivation of her little garden, assisted only by Jane and a boy of the neighborhood, who came daily to the cottage to perform certain necessary services. This spring, however, Helen had not been able or inclined to bestow much thought upon it; still it showed up wonderfully well, and was not even now a poor tribute to her taste or gardening abilities.

"I think you have done very well with it, dear," said Mrs. Elliott. She and Helen had been moving about among the flowers, and now they came to a stand by the side of a trellis-work over which wistaria had been trained to grow.

"How beautiful these irregular masses are!" she said, reaching up to gather some of the handsome purplish flowers for herself.

"It is a very poor result," replied Helen, "compared with what might be done with even a bit of ground like this. But you can well see how I have very little time for these things."

As Helen spoke, she too reached upward, gathering some of the blossoms to add to those which Mrs. Elliott already held. Mr. Elliott had by this time joined the two women, and both he and his wife noticed with pain how thin and weary Helen had

grown. And yet, as she stood there, filling her long, slender arms with those rich, glorious purple flowers, the lengthening shadows of the approaching evening-tide enhancing the scene, they both thought that they had never seen her look more beautiful and majestic. No amount of spiritual suffering could destroy the grace and dignity of Helen Galbraith's person, and the suffering through which she was then passing gave a pathetic depth to her face, a meaning to it as of great, unspoken things, which, with all its marvelous beauty, it had never before possessed.

"The garden is quite sufficient as it stands, Mrs. Galbraith," said Mr. Elliott. "It does honor to your taste and ability—but I should think from this point of view," he continued, looking out on the landscape, "that it was an unnecessary indulgence. I am sure I should be quite content to gaze upon that broad sweep of meadow below; to follow it with my eye as it slowly climbs the western sky, until it loses itself in that fine piece of woodland there above your cottage."

"That is what gives Alex the most pleasure. From his window there he spends hours watching the prospect. The charm of it, he says, is that the landscape is always different—never the same any two days. Only a landscape painter, I suppose, would feel that to the extent that he does," she added.

A few moments later Mr. and Mrs Elliott left. The day was rapidly dying—the fields were given over to silence, and to gathering darkness. Upon all things the peace of approaching night was

settling like an unpronounced benediction. Helen stood for a while before the cottage. A strange and transfiguring beauty seemed to have touched the world and spiritualized it.

"I think I can really feel the soul of things at this hour," she whispered to herself.

Meadow-line and forest-line were fast fading; the mists commenced to rise over the lowlands, while above, on the wooded height, the shadows deepened and darkened. For a few moments only was Helen able to surrender herself to these influences, the influences which belong to evening-tide, and which, if yielded to, restore peace and quiet to the tempest-tossed. In the fast gathering darkness there came upon her, as it did nearly every hour in the day, an overpowering sense of her own mistakes —of her terrible sin. She buried her face in her hands and sank down upon the doorstep of the cottage. Tears did not come to her, for her soul was filled with something which no tears could express. It seemed to her, as she crouched there, that a darkness the like of which had never before closed over a human soul was about to close over her. Out of her memory there came to her scenes from her early life, scenes in which she had always been the central figure, the spotless, virgin type of pure girlhood. She had been too pure even to think of purity. She had simply taken life and lived it freely and joyously, her faith resting upon God. How often had she as a girl lingered out of doors in the gathering twilight! It had been the time when she dreamed her dreams and thought of all "the wonder there was to be." Amid all of these

voices from the past there came now an unexpected one whispering to her of a faith which she had lost, and for which she had found no substitute. A voice within her seemed to repeat slowly the words:

"Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; therefore my heart faileth me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me." Was it a prayer? She had hardly repeated it as such, but as if there were some saving virtue in the mere memory of those words which she had learned long ago in childhood, there came to her, like an answer, those other words of that daring preacher who proclaimed—"Sin shall not have dominion over you!"

When she reentered the house she found Galbraith asleep, so quietly closing the window by his side she crept away to the kitchen and to her duties there.

CHAPTER IV.

THE day after Mr. and Mrs. Elliott had paid their visit to the Galbraiths, Helen received the following note:

"MY DEAR MRS. GALBRAITH,—In planning something pleasant for the public and interesting for you, I have thought you might take up Bastien-Lepage's Jeanne d'Arc—giving some account of the picture, assisted by a few personal recollections of the artist. It seems to me it is the time of the year when such a picture is likely to be seen to the best advantage—and it is always wise, I think, to direct public attention as much as possible to the fine things in the Metropolitan; for these things are available for our people, and may become a real influence in their lives, if presented to them in the right spirit. All the details of this special little art campaign I leave to your own taste and judgment, only let us have it finished up as soon as you can conveniently do so.

My wife and I brought away very cherished recollections of our visit of yesterday. With the kindest, most sympathetic regards for yourself and your husband, I remain your sincere friend—

SHERMAN ELLIOTT."

When this note was received it was too late for Helen to make a day of it in the city; so, after her

domestic duties had all been attended to, she gave most of the afternoon and evening to Alex, making him talk to her of Bastien-Lepage, of his own recollections of him, and of his impressions of Bastien's work: a very sympathetic subject for him.

"Here's a fine chance for you, little girl," he said, in what to Helen seemed a distinctly cheerful tone. Wearied out as he had been the afternoon before, the following morning found him apparently much stronger and more hopeful than he had been for some time. The presence of a man like Sherman Elliott had acted as a tonic—the thought of him seemed to give to Galbraith a renewed faith in the vigor and strength of true manhood—and when he recalled Mr. Elliott's promise, he felt a security against the future which gave him fresh courage to take up his own struggle.

"You must do your best on that, sweetheart," he said.

"I am glad I have something you like so much, dear. Tell me, do you remember much of Bastien personally?"

"He was a great figure when I first went to Paris. He was looked upon as the artist's artist—the man whom all the artists loved, and whose work they adored. His position was very firmly fixed at that time, for it was only a few years, you know, before his death. But earlier he had had a terrible fight. His spirit, however, was always courageous and resolute; and while his physical strength was never great, he won the battle completely before he laid down his arms to die. Yet the burden which he bore crushed him, I do not doubt. He died at the

very height of his promise. It was felt by all who were supposed to know that he would do still greater things than he had done; but it was not to be. I remember so well the last great saying of his which came to us students, repeated by an intimate friend of his. Bastien was showing to this friend his study of the body of Gambetta. To Bastien himself death seemed yet a great way off. To this friend he said—'I am not afraid of death. It is nothing to die; but the point is to survive, and who is sure of influencing posterity? Come, I'm talking wildly,' he said, calling himself up with a halt, 'let us paint true, the rest is nothing.'"

Helen was sitting at Galbraith's feet; every now and then she made a note of something he said, and frequently he stooped to her, kissing first her lips and then her rich, brown hair, which he loved so well to touch with his own lips.

"So much that is tragic seems to go always hand in hand with whatever is great," said Helen, "that often I cannot bear to contemplate the great things of the world. The tremendous amount of pain written over against all of them is terrible to think of. But tell me something else," she requested in a brighter tone, realizing that her words were well calculated to distress Alex.

"One of the most interesting things connected with Lepage, which I can recall, was something which took place before I went to Paris. I have heard many accounts of it from the men of that time, and so feel familiar with the story. It was when he painted his picture for the Prix de Rome, and got the second prize instead of the first; yet the

first was conceded to him by the artists themselves, and some of his competitors fastened a palm to the frame of his picture as it hung in the Salon. I remember being told that just after the palm had been placed there amid much excitement, Sarah Bernhardt stalked suddenly through the crowd of artists, amateurs, and critics gathered about the picture, and pausing in her most dramatic manner, and raising her eyes to the picture, to which was attached the palm, she exclaimed, pointing to it with a sweeping gesture—'C'est bien placée!' For many years, too, there was much talk of a scene which took place on the night of the award, in the restaurant of Mdlle. Anna, the favorite haunt in Paris of artists and their friends, as you remember. That night Bastien and his competitor, Comerre, with their partizans, were assembled at Mdlle. Anna's. The men on each side talked loudly of the two pictures which had led the competition for the Prix de Rome. The room in which they were gathered was hung with paintings by various artists, and the pictures of the men who had won the Prix de Rome in past years were crowned with wreaths of laurel. Late in the evening a young American artist—I do not now recall his name—rose from his seat at Bastien-Lepage's table, and, waving a laurel leaf, exclaimed that he would crown the picture of the man to whom the artists that year had awarded the Prix de Rome. Instantly his comrades raised him on their shoulders. Comerre's friends rushed forward to prevent this, but the young American was borne aloft across the room, through the excited, protesting ranks, and

crowned with his laurel wreath a picture of Bastien's which hung in the room."

"Were you in Paris, dear, the year that Bastien's Jeanne d'Arc was in the Salon, or was it before you arrived?"

"It was in the Salon of 1880, and that was my first spring in Paris. You may imagine my wonder and my enjoyment. I recall a good many of the pictures of that year; but none as I do the Jeanne d'Arc, because for me it was an epoch-making picture. I believe I can truly say that no painting has ever affected me so personally as did that picture—and that is saying a great deal. Everything is not harmonious in it—everything is not correct. In fact, the perspective of the picture is bad—the background crowds forward on the view too much and spoils the effect of the figure. But the figure—this real Jeanne d'Arc, the peasant girl—is perfect, and when one gets to the head, to the face, no words are too strong—these are sublime."

"The eyes of Jeanne have always made the picture for me," said Helen. "Do you not think they are the main feature?"

"Well, yes, in the sense that they really make the human face in most cases. Certainly in this picture they make it. No such clear, wonderful eyes were ever painted—and it is in them that we read the girl's vision. It was the expression of those eyes which made the picture so impressive to me—which gave me a new point of view in art, one which I could adopt as my own:—I mean how it was possible for an artist to impart intensity of human feeling and divine inspiration through a

human face. The same principle can be applied to landscape painting. There is a mysterious, subtle something in all nature—a spirit in natural things of life beyond their mere material growth and change, and the highest function of the landscape painter is to discern this; and to find some way of expressing it at the same time he expresses simple, natural facts.

In the evening Helen looked over her books, seeking among them the Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff. It was entertaining to both Alex and Helen to reread the ardent enthusiasms of this remarkable girl, who had been a student in Paris at the same time that Galbraith was there, and whose unconcealed admiration for Bastien-Lepage had been very well known and often talked of in the different Paris studios. As Helen read now from the Journal, Galbraith made the request that she should read a certain passage once again. It was this:

"We came home to dine after leaving Bastien, who is still in bed, though his eyes are bright and he seems to be free from pain. He has gray eyes, the exquisite charm of which vulgar souls cannot be expected to appreciate. Do you understand what I mean by this? Eyes that have looked into the eyes of Jeanne d'Arc."

"I like that," said Galbraith, when Helen had read it a second time. "That looks as if she understood—as if there was not so much affectation about her after all. I remember very well what striking eyes Bastien had—and the expression of them was wonderful too."

The next morning Helen, after an early breakfast,

first took her way to the Astor Library to look for information she needed, then to the Museum where she arrived between eleven and twelve o'clock. On her passage through the first floor Helen paused, as she always did when she went to the Metropolitan, to look just once again at Story's Medea, Semiramis, and Cleopatra; but having now so limited a time for her other and more important observations, she hurried up the stairs, pausing only when she had finally reached the room she had in view.

Once in the gallery Helen felt that she must direct all the forces of her mind toward the work which lay before her, and yet she found it impossible here, as she had done elsewhere, to banish from her mind thoughts of those other things which were eating into her very being. Looking back upon the winter months just gone, she saw now that she had been as one who is sunk by means of a strong narcotic into a deep, irresponsible slumber. Once again she was fully alive to the realities amid which she stood, and comprehended in its deepest sense the extent of the appalling evil which now enthralled her. She was in the room with the picture which she had come so far to study, but having looked up at it once she turned away, and sinking down into a seat near by, remained like one stunned. A realization of the conditions of her present life rushed upon her overpoweringly. When the horrible sacrifice had been first made she had scarcely been responsible for her actions. In fact, she was for a time so insensible to impressions, that she could now only with difficulty recall the events of those weeks that succeeded her surrender of her-

self to Mr. Westmore. She had then seemed to possess only the power to accept, in a sort of blind agony, the consequences of her conduct.

Since that time she had certainly learned, as no one ever learns except from bitter, personal experience, how a sin, though committed in the desire to obtain good for another, can so eat into the spiritual structure of life, can so deface the finer, richer adornments of the soul, that there remains not a quality of the mind or of the heart which in time does not suffer contamination. Even her devoted, absorbing love for Galbraith, Helen saw, had been affected by this evil which had crept into her life. She loved Galbraith as devotedly, as absolutely, as she had ever done—but with a difference. She had put a blot upon her life, and nothing now could ever efface it. With this consciousness in her heart—with the pain born of it stabbing her hourly, her love for Galbraith was no longer the simple thing it had been. No matter what he was still to her, no matter what she had been willing to suffer for him, or what she was still willing to suffer, she could never feel herself worthy again—could never feel that she had the absolute right to him which had once been hers! How, she asked herself a thousand times a day, how was she to get this awful thing entirely out of her life—to free herself from the bondage, the spiritual, mental bondage, in which she was held—so that she might walk forth again with a cleansed heart, a purified purpose, facing life openly, frankly, unreservedly as it was her nature to do?

Light from a great many directions was breaking

in upon her now—the questions which she was constantly putting to herself showed this—but in proportion as the light came to her, her mental suffering increased tremendously, so much so, that at times she restrained herself with difficulty from crying aloud in the agony of her despair.

But she must not now allow herself to dwell longer upon these thoughts. Rising resolutely, she sought the canvas which had brought her hither.

Bastien-Lepage's Jeanne d'Arc was well known to Helen. Occupied, however, as she had been during the past winter, she had not thought for months even of taking a glance at it. In fact, she had been to the Museum but three or four times during the past year; and then on hurried trips for special purposes. Helen's work on Mr. Elliott's paper had had more to do with the every-day, varying art exhibitions of the city, with the active art influences predominant there, than with anything permanent and fixed, like the exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum. Her mind, however, was very appreciative of the wisdom of Mr. Elliott's plan, that she should begin now to draw public attention more and more to some special features of art to be seen at the Metropolitan—this being important as the pictures in this exhibition are the only ones easily available for the masses in New York. She felt anxious to use her knowledge of this special picture in such a manner as to carry out acceptably Mr. Elliott's purpose concerning it: namely to get out of it the most suggestive things it contained. She was hardly prepared to find it so suggestive to herself, so strongly personal. As she looked a

second time at the great painting, hanging quite alone at one end of the room, a ray of light seemed to flash suddenly across the face of Jeanne, revealing it to Helen as it had never before been revealed to her. For a moment she felt blinded by the brilliant effect of the entire canvas, for the light reflected from the countenance of the peasant girl illumined the whole scene amid which she was placed. Helen stood as one transfixed, scrutinizing the picture with a most penetrating gaze.

All thought of her work went at once out of her mind. Spiritual life alone existed for her. She was conscious of nothing but her own spiritual needs, of her own spiritual deficiencies. It was not a painted being before whom she stood, into whose face and eyes she looked; it was a woman of flesh and blood like herself, but a woman inspired with such insight into great things as no woman, perhaps, had ever before been inspired. Those clear, wonderful eyes penetrated to the innermost recesses of Helen's soul, and read there the fulness and the bitterness of her own spiritual agony; and at the same time that they seemed to discern so much, Helen felt them to be still very human, the eyes of a simple, earnest peasant girl, in the midst of homely surroundings. For this reason the picture appealed so peculiarly to Helen. For a long while she stood where she had paused, entirely absorbed in contemplating the girl's face, which had an immense meaning for her. A great light commenced to fall about her troubled spirit—and the way which she so ardently desired opened before her now for the first time with anything like clearness, or distinct-

ness. Fearing lest her own emotions might entirely overcome her, she moved away from the picture and made a tour of the room.

It did not last long, however ; she soon found herself back before the Jeanne d'Arc. For a long time she remained there in deep meditation, reading her own heart, while trying to grasp the full meaning of Bastien's message. At last becoming aware of the approach of some one, she saw her young artist friend, St. George Turner, coming to speak with her. Turner was very fond of talking with Helen. She always interested him and pleased his artistic taste, and he knew instinctively that she liked him and was glad to listen to what he had to say. This morning, however, Helen was not especially glad to meet anyone whom she knew, being so deeply moved in a personal way, but fortunately Turner did not jar upon her sensibilities, and she greeted him kindly.

"How is it, Mr. Turner," she asked, "that I see you in this commonplace situation, making the regular rounds of a public art gallery?"

"Well," said he, "I am thinking of going away to Brittany to paint this summer, and I wish to see one or two things here first."

"Then are you not going to be with Mr. Chase this year?" St. George Turner was a sort of protégé of Mr. Chase, and usually spent his summers at Shinnecock.

"No, not this summer ; I have decided to go elsewhere. I want a new and different influence. I feel that I am getting into a rut. I need to be stimulated by fresh ideas," replied Turner.

"You are not getting away from the American school, I hope?" said Helen. "Mr. Chase cannot afford to have any of you younger men desert his standard. If he goes forward in his purpose of establishing a genuine school of American art he will have a tremendous work on his hands, and will need all the help he can get." Helen was almost as interested as was Galbraith in Mr. Chase and in the aims he cherished for American artists, and so she fell easily into such conversation as this, especially when talking with one of Mr. Chase's friends.

"Oh, no, never!" replied St. George Turner with enthusiasm. "I look upon Mr. Chase as my master, and his cause is my cause. However, I am not opposed to getting a new point of view, so I am off for three months."

All the time that Turner was talking to Helen he was looking at the Jeanne d'Arc.

"Isn't that a fine thing—such a piece of work as any man might be proud to have done?"

"I have just been enjoying it myself," replied Helen in a quiet, subdued tone. She could not trust herself to speak more explicitly than this.

"And yet I hear that the critics say the Jeanne d'Arc is not high art," he said, giving the picture that peculiarly questioning look which only a trained painter can give. "Little they know about it," he continued, "especially, since they give as their reason, that Bastien did not paint Jeanne clad in armor, and with the white and delicate hands of a lady; instead of painting her a simple peasant girl in the midst of homely surroundings."

"That is what makes the real fineness—the real merit of the picture, my husband says," replied Helen.

"Of course it does!" exclaimed Turner. "Why Bastien-Lepage explained the whole thing himself—explained it years before he commenced to paint this picture. Talking to a friend he said: 'Nothing is great but the truth. We must paint what we know and what we love. I come from a village in Lorraine. I shall paint first the country people and the landscape of my country as they are. I shall paint a Jeanne d'Arc too—a real Jeanne d'Arc belonging to our own home and not to my studio.' There's the keynote to the whole work," added Turner.

"I can see," said Helen, "that there are points in it open to criticism, but surely in sentiment and composition it is a masterpiece—at any rate it is so to me."

"It is a masterpiece, and the points which are often so severely criticised are not so open to criticism after all when one understands. Nothing, of course, can be said in defense of the perspective—that is really bad. However, those figures in the background, which some people take to be the indistinct shapes of glorified saints, are really those of the painted wooden images to be seen upon altars. Bastien had long contemplated painting a Jeanne d'Arc as listening to the voices: he had even meant to represent her on her knees at the foot of the altar, and the faint shapes in the background of the picture are only representations of those images which she would have seen there. I think myself," he con-

tinued, "it would have been better taste to leave the images out—they need to be explained and so mar the artistic effect of the whole; yet Bastien's reason for placing them there was a good one, and the thing was not done heedlessly, nor for lack of proper knowledge, as some would have us believe."

"The light, I sometimes think, is unnatural," said Helen, "the effect it produces is so cold."

"Yes, at first, it does seem so," replied Turner, "especially when one comes upon it, as we do to-day, from our own warm, noonday sun; but it is entirely true to nature—true to that part of nature which Bastien sought to represent. Any one who has been for even a short stay in northern France will understand the cold effect here produced-especially when it is remembered that the effect sought is that of an overcast day, with cold light falling from a cloudy sky upon vegetation of a much bluer green than ours in America. But this was not the only effect Bastien could paint, and though his power as a colorist has been disputed, I feel sure he possessed it in a very marked degree. No number of critics," added Turner, in an almost boyish way "can beat me out of my admiration for the great Bastien!"

"Nothing convinces me more of his greatness," said Helen, "than the selection he has made here of his subject. It is like an inspiration to have selected such a subject, and to have succeeded with it as he has done."

"No doubt," said Turner, "the life itself of Jeanne d'Arc is something like a divine revelation—it was so remarkable that nothing else explains it, even in this materialistic age of ours. Bastien-Lepage, it

seems to me, felt it in this way, and tried to convey this impression. No one but a true poet, possibly, could have felt this as he did, and could have so expressed it."

"His picture is certainly an angelic vision made into flesh and blood," said Helen.

"Well, it is another illustration, I heard one of our best men say, of how, from age to age, one noble spirit reacts upon another noble spirit. The hero and the poet! They mutually understand one another; otherwise they could never so completely complement one another." As Turner brought this sentence to a close he laughed a little at himself, saying: "But what fine speeches I am making, Mrs. Galbraith! I beg your pardon. It is very easy to deal in heroics when contemplating the heroic!" He made a mock bow to Helen, assuming great dignity as he did so; then returning to his boyish manner, and with a merry, "Good-by—I am off to Brittany, the jolliest land!" he vanished into the adjoining corridor.

For a moment Helen stood quite still, looking after him. What a handsome, happy type of promising young manhood he was, and how well there were blended in him a certain seriousness of purpose and a lighter vein of humor. He seemed really to mean to go in for hard work, to aim at something great, and this cheery attitude toward life would be the best way to save him from much suffering. She liked him well enough to hope that he might succeed. The young artist himself soon passed from the Museum out into the park. For the present, he had lost his interest in pictures—he preferred the

green trees and the fresh, soft grass to be found out of doors. Something, not exactly comprehended by himself, had been touched in him—a new sense of womanhood had been created in his mind. He thought of Bastien's Jeanne d'Arc and of the pale, beautiful woman standing there before it in the gallery ; and he could not tell which one had moved him most ; but his thought lingered longest with the pale, beautiful woman, and the trip to Brittany seemed of more importance because he had told her of it.

Half an hour later Helen was seated in a Fifth Avenue stage on her way down-town. This was a slow way of proceeding, to be sure, but she felt in no haste now. She had put aside all thought of her work. In her mind there was a vague kind of regret that she should have done this. She had no wish to disappoint Mr. Elliott, but it was simply impossible for her to do anything with the Jeanne d'Arc—that is, anything for practical purposes. A sacred line had been drawn for her about that picture —its influence had gone too deeply for it to be treated merely as any other newspaper subject might be treated ; and besides, she felt now, that it would have been impossible for her to say anything vital about it without striking the personal note much too significantly—and this, in any event, she would have shrunk from doing. But though she felt herself unable now to use the picture for the purposes to which her mind had been first directed, she had found a far greater use to make of its influence. If young Turner went from the gallery with a new sense of womanhood in his mind, it was not surpris-

ing, for it grew naturally out of the very atmosphere in which he had stood. Certainly, a new sense of womanhood had been born in Helen's mind, as well as in his, during that morning. It, no doubt, had been preparing itself a long while for birth, but not until to-day had it gained sufficient strength to spring into fulness of being. After St. George Turner left her, Helen had thought out to their natural conclusions the impressions which Bastien's picture had produced upon her. More clearly than anything else she saw the real height to which true womanhood may rise. If such great things had been revealed to a simple peasant maid, unlearned, untutored, whose only strength was a pure heart subject to the will of God, why might not other women—those who could read the true version of the vision—why might not these also rise above the ordinary plane on which most lives are lived—rise and free themselves from weakness and insufficiency? *They can, they can*, a voice outside of herself seemed to say to her—but only when the necessary conditions have been fufilled: that *their hearts be pure and subject to the will of God.* For the first time now she saw this distinctly as the inexorable law—the spiritual force which alone has the power to regenerate and to save. A flood of light broke around her—the clearness and brilliancy of it dazzled her for the moment—then steadying herself, she grasped the truth which it brought with it; and in her hand she knew that she held the golden thread which, followed up, would lead her out of her captivity.

"Yes! yes!" she cried in her soul, "that was why,

that was how it came about—but, thank God, it is over now!"

She turned away from the Jeanne d'Arc—it had taught her its lesson—and now she had many things, great things to do. As she came out from the gallery, out into the beauty and freshness of the spring afternoon—for midday was long ago passed—her spirit seemed literally to leap within her—no height seemed too high, too difficult, for her to ascend.

CHAPTER V.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon and Mr. Westmore was seated in his private office, not engaged with important papers as was usually the case at this hour of the day, but simply indulging himself in an idle spell of a half hour or more. Mr. Westmore felt especially like congratulating himself this afternoon; everything had gone so finely for him during the past six months. In business circles his position had never been so good as it was now, at least so it seemed to him—and his millions had very materially increased during the past winter. But, like most other successful men, Mr. Westmore was not quite satisfied with his present state of prosperity; it seemed to him that if his past energy and ability had achieved so much, the simple law of progress demanded of him still greater things in the future. Obedient to the dictates of this law Mr. Westmore had formed very vast plans for the future—he had marked out a certain summit in the view ahead of him, with the purpose of pausing in his efforts only when he had worked his way to this height and planted himself firmly there, as one of the great, fixed financial forces in American life and American affairs. Such an ambition is naturally looked upon in the world as worthy of all praise and honor, and the man who reaches the goal is the hero of modern life—his wisdom is considered a match for that of scholars and statesmen. Wo, however,

to the man who, in his daring enterprises is overtaken by adverse circumstances with which he may not be skilful enough to cope! This man is pointed to as a fool in his day and generation, and held up as an example to all who may come after him.

Mr. Westmore, however, in considering his own career, saw only the brilliant side of the picture—he was concerned alone with the applause of men—and having, like the ideal American youth, no such word as *fail* in his vocabulary, he smiled complacently over his vast plans, and thought of himself proudly, as one of the financial geniuses which the nineteenth century has produced. In family matters, also, Mr. Westmore felt that he had much to congratulate himself upon—though less, it must be candidly admitted, in this sphere of life, than in that where alone his own strong hand had guided the ship. To reduce the overpowering quantity of vulgarity possessed by Mrs. Westmore was a matter utterly impossible of achievement; to this Mr. Westmore had at last resigned his spirit, and especially had this become necessary to him, as with advancing years Mrs. Westmore showed continuous signs of improving health and hopefulness. His daughters, though, had been helped in large measure by the advantages which he had so generously given them. True, occasionally these daughters of his showed unmistakably the cloven foot, still Mr. Westmore flattered himself that there were many gratifying things about each one of them—which was undoubtedly true. In thinking of his wife he recalled with amusement the great disappointment which that lady had suffered in connection with Andrew Tomp-

son. When she learned fully the distinction of Tompson's social position, she at once determined to settle her oldest single daughter in life as the wife of that very delicate young man who seemed so insignificant to her. In an unguarded moment she gave her confidence in this matter to her husband, after which she entertained no further hopes of Tompson as a future son-in-law.

Westmore, poor man—there was really a good deal to be said on his side concerning his domestic discontent—had learned not to expect great things of his family; his solace was in other things—in his business success—in the culture which he had obtained for himself—and of late in the absorbing passion which he had conceived for Helen Galbraith; a passion which a kind fate had seemed to sanction and befriend. Looking over the extensive horizon of his individual world, nothing brought him the satisfaction, the deep sense of personal gratification and pride, that his thoughts of Helen brought him. He felt that he was indeed an extremely fortunate man. Helen in every way filled his senses with delight. She was his perfect ideal of a woman made into real human flesh and blood. Her dignity, her modesty, even the spirit with which she repulsed him at times, all these were enchanting to him. Had she been willing to permit it, he would gladly have surrounded her life with every condition of beauty and comfort—would have lavished upon her every kind of luxury. As he thought of her now, he felt inexpressibly annoyed and troubled that she was willing to accept so little from him—and even that little with apparent unhappiness and discontent.

Mr. Westmore was not oblivious of the fact that Helen had altered very much in personal appearance during the past year. He was well aware that she could not be considered so handsome, so perfect in her proportions as she had once been. But even Mr. Westmore, with his keen practical vision, seeing all things most readily from their material side, even he could not fail to see that Helen had yet gained in both her face and person a something, which made her more appealing than she had ever been in the days of her more perfect health and beauty. That this something was a truly tragic greatness, because behind all of Helen's conduct there had been the most supreme spirit of self-sacrifice—this Mr. Westmore did not quite perceive. In fact, in no event could he have rightly perceived this kind of thing. Such perception was denied to him by nature. That the pathetic quality in Helen had greatly increased, this Mr. Westmore did see—and it is due to him to say that in consequence he felt for her a tenderness, a compassionate yearning, which he had never yet felt for any other human being—not even for any one of his own children, at the period of helpless babyhood. Besides such feelings as these Mr. Westmore entertained others for Helen of a practical, and, as he thought, of a sensible nature. He wanted very much to bring into her life some kind of joy and brightness; and he looked forward anxiously to the time when he thought this might be possible. So far as he could see, with Galbraith dead, there could exist no reason why Helen should not look out upon a new life, and take it up with hope and happiness. On his own

part, Mr. Westmore was eager to do everything possible—or, rather, permissible to him by the restrictions of society—to start Helen successfully upon a brighter life. The great point was to get her to view the situation as he viewed it—to believe that, when fate has denied one a legitimate happiness, no moral law should have the power to hold one back from seizing upon whatever chance happiness life may lay at one's feet. This Westmore considered an entirely sensible view of life; and he thought that if Helen could only be induced to look upon it with favor, there would then exist no reason whatever for her not accepting his love on natural terms, as he wished her to do.

"Why must people have so many moral ifs?" Mr. Westmore asked himself aloud. "They are but the obstacles to success—even to happiness," he continued. After a few moments he added, again in an audible tone: "Had I been so scrupulous as she, I should never have got my fortune out of Wall Street as I have done."

The windows of Mr. Westmore's private office were thrown open this afternoon, and the room was richly adorned with fragrant spring flowers. Mr. Westmore looked about his place with a feeling of perfect content. It gratified him to think that his own taste had created it—a retreat into which he could retire and take life, for a few hours at any rate, on his own terms, according to the mood which controlled him. To-day the mood which controlled him was one delightfully reflective. He very seldom indulged himself in this kind of thing, for usually he looked upon such indulgence as a sad waste

of valuable time, besides encouraging idle habits of mind. But at the present time everything seemed so charmingly satisfactory, that he could not refuse himself this little indulgence.

There was nothing Mr. Westmore believed in so much as the force of his own will—in his individual power to press and carry forward a cherished scheme. He had tested it, this will-power of his, in the most strenuous times, when men of powerful strength and intellectual force had measured their ability against his—but never yet had his own given way. Never had he been beaten at his own game. It was not surprising then, that he possessed a great confidence in himself—in his talent to carry things through. As he thought, this afternoon, of the things which he had planned for the future, he did not doubt for a moment that in the end he would succeed in molding Helen Galbraith entirely to his own purposes, and in making of her just the kind of woman he would like her to be. And he believed himself a very generous man on this point, for he wished her to enjoy life to its full when she should be free to do so, to surround herself, without scruple, with comforts and luxuries which his bounty was to provide. In exchange for all this, he felt that he did not ask much—only a little personal indulgence for himself, only a little happiness of his own, which certainly was not much, he thought, for a man to ask who had known as scant happiness as he had known. His thought was even tinged now with a shade of sadness as he came to this point. The desire for personal happiness was very great in him, and he believed himself

capable of it, too. Now that he was growing older, and worldly success had given him time for reflection, he began to feel very keenly the need of happiness, and to think of it as a possible thing.

In such reflections as these Mr. Westmore spent nearly an hour. The spring air got into his head, inclining him to all sorts of dreams; and it pleased him immensely to think of himself as the special arbiter in the fortunes of those with whom he wished to concern himself. No man had ever permitted himself a more perfect license of conduct than Mr. Westmore at times permitted himself. Should the exigencies of the occasion demand again a great degree of freedom of him, he was still willing to put no kind of restraint upon his actions. He therefore did not fear failure, for he knew that he would find himself equal to any demand the future might make upon him. His past experiences with people had made it impossible for him to think of another's will equalling his own; and so it was natural for him to consider that he alone was to be the final judge in matters between Helen Galbraith and himself. At times he found her, to be sure, very little inclined to tractability—but this only added piquancy to their relationship—for of course no man likes to conquer too easily. However, the important fact in their relationship continued the same, in the end he always conquered; the rights of a master in this situation, as in all others, it would seem, remaining with him.

The Fifth Avenue stage bore Helen slowly down-

town after she withdrew from the Museum. The emotions of the morning had left her little inclined for food; but realizing that her physical strength was becoming each day less and less, and knowing that she needed to husband it all she could, she stopped at a quiet place, where she often took a simple luncheon, and forcing herself to eat something, she felt more fitted to go through the rest of the day. When this was over she made her way to her own little workroom in the newspaper building. Here she spent an hour in rapid and close writing. When she had finished this, she placed the sheets in a large envelope and addressed them to Mr. Elliott. This was the first step in the Calvary she meant to ascend. Then she occupied herself in destroying all the papers belonging to her—she had no other personal possessions there—and when this was done she gave one eager, searching look to the little apartment.

"Thank God!" she said, in a deep-toned, tremulous voice; then she hurried out, locking the door, and placing the key in her coat-pocket.

Unless something unusual had happened, she knew very well that she would find Mr. Westmore at this hour of the day in his private office, so she made her way swiftly along the narrow, crowded streets that led to it. She did not feel weary this afternoon. She stepped lightly, with all of her old-time grace of movement, the purpose which had come into her heart quickening and strengthening the flow of blood through her whole being. There was a completeness about Helen Galbraith's character which made it impossible for her to do things by halves—and this was readily seen in the unreserved sacrifice which

she had made of herself, when she had thought such a sacrifice necessary. Now that she beheld her course in a natural light she determined that the extent of her retribution should be equal to her offense. It was necessary that she should reveal herself fully to those who had loved and trusted her. The demands of her own soul had at last become supreme—she could not live another day surrounded by love and trust to which she had no right. Yet the question came to her ; was she, in following this course, about to inflict pain upon others beyond any right her own spiritual life gave her? The answer was clear and distinct. To spare others was to spare herself—to escape that extreme punishment and discipline in which she felt alone lay her entire purification. Still, necessary as it seemed, *could* she inflict upon those she loved that pain which the course before her involved—might not a partial regeneration suffice? As an answer to these doubts, there came to her those familiar words spoken by Savonarola to Romola, when she sought to flee from Florence and from her duties there :

"You are seeking your own will, my daughter. You are seeking some good other than the law you are bound to obey. But how will you find good? It is not a thing of choice; it is a river that flows by the path of obedience. I say again, man cannot choose his duties. You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the sorrow they bring. But you will go forth, and what will you find, my daughter? Sorrow without duty—bitter herbs, and no bread with them."

Without doubt the way lay plainly before her. The higher demands of her own soul pointed alone in one direction—she must not now shrink from inflicting pain, for to do so was to spare herself the most necessary part of her retribution—was to seek her own will, was to yield to her own weakness. Yield she would not! Her own will should go—should be surrendered. She would submit herself unflinchingly to the conditions of regeneration which had been revealed to her—*a purified heart, subject to the will of God.*

Mr. Westmore was still occupied by his reflections when Helen was brought, by his confidential clerk, to the door of his private office. He rose to greet her with the profoundest gratitude of manner, and it seemed to him that nothing could be more appropriate or acceptable than that she should come in, unasked, upon him, just at the time when his mind was filled with thoughts of her and his heart was aching with desire for her. Surely, he thought, as Helen passed into the room, the fates are very kind to-day.

Possibly there is nothing which equals in its excess the passion of an old man for a young woman. The disparity in temperament which years have produced in the two inspires the man with a spirit of despair, rendering him like potter's clay in the hands of his mistress. Strong as Mr. Westmore was in practical matters, with a will unequaled by any, he was no exception to this rule; and Helen Galbraith could have made him minister to her vainest whim, had she so chosen. Certainly, had she ever doubted her power over him, she could not

now do so as she beheld the eagerness of manner with which he greeted her. It was impossible for her to see this without regret—she was too strongly human for that. She could not honestly withhold from Mr. Westmore a certain amount of justice. She knew that she was truly the light of his life—that every other affection was as nothing when weighed against this feeling which he had conceived for her, and the woman in her drew back for the moment from bringing him pain. But her course was fixed—was unalterable, and nothing Mr. Westmore could do or say would avail him anything. He became strangely aware at once of some inflexible purpose in her heart. The sternness with which she returned his greeting caused a chill to creep into the air, suggestive of a wintry blast rather than of a warm, sympathetic day in spring. He placed a chair near the open window, and undertook to guide her to it, but she remained standing just where she had paused after entering the room. For a few moments she did not speak; she seemed to be straightening out her thoughts. Then, in a voice which showed how thoroughly she was now mistress of herself, she said:

"Mr. Westmore, I have come here to tell you something which I preferred not to write to you; because, had I written, you might have concluded that I was not strong enough to stand face to face with the consequences of my own deeds." She paused, but as he made no reply she continued:

"Be patient a few moments and I will have done. I am coming to my point. It is useless for me to go back to the things which have brought about

the relationship which has existed between us. On my side, there is only one thing to be said; and I do not wish you to doubt for a moment the absolute truth of this statement. I have never thought of you in any other light, except as the person who could obtain for me a paying position, as you have done; and who, by your continued favor, could retain me in it. Beyond such power as this, I have sought in no way to influence you—though enough power to procure this for myself did I seek to gain over you. And to gain this and render it profitable to myself I have been willing, as you too well know, to make any kind of personal sacrifice. I feel sure that you understand why I did this. You must know that it was for love of my husband; that I might save him from domestic discomfort, from privations during the short time his life is to last. Of this I cannot speak further, and I feel that it is not necessary, for I believe *even you* have been able to understand somewhat the kind of love mine has been." Again she paused, but he remained silent, standing erect and looking fixedly at her. She went on:

"There is another point I cannot dwell upon; but I must mention it. The suffering which has come to me out of this sin I have committed has been far greater than I could ever hope to make you understand. I should not even attempt to make you understand it, for it would be impossible to you, I know. To say that this suffering has been an hourly agony of the soul is hardly to give a suggestion of what it has meant to me. But the important thing is, that this suffering has revealed to

me what a thoroughly false moral view I possessed, and how absolutely impossible it is for wrong ever to lead to right, or for evil to produce good. Though I have sacrificed myself in love for the comfort and support of my husband, I see now that I have done him the greatest wrong, the greatest injustice that I could possibly have done him. It would have been kinder to let him die from any kind of privation, than to have subjected myself, as I have done, to a course which his beautiful soul would look upon as worse than death. I think when I came to you for help I must have been insane with despair—this is my only defense. Still, I recognize the fact that there was something morally wrong, something morally weak about me, of which I was ignorant; otherwise I should have known from the first how to distinguish correctly between sin and goodness—between falseness and honesty. So far as you are concerned," she continued, Mr. Westmore still looking fixedly at her, "I need to make but one more confession. I had intended enduring the agony of this relationship with you so long as my husband should live, so that I might have a right to call upon you for help in any moment of further adversity or need. I never meant, at any time, that it should continue a moment beyond the day of his death. I speak thus candidly of his death, because we all know that he is a doomed man. This course is, however, no longer possible to me—with the light which has come to me there has come my moral deliverance. I see that unless I end this thing at once, while my husband is still alive, no kind of retribution will avail me anything. Unless I do this,

I shall not then have done for him the little which still remains within my power to do."

Mr. Westmore had continued to look steadily at Helen all the while she had been speaking to him. Her beauty and dignity seemed to him of a finer quality than he had ever observed it to be before; and though he meant to make a fight against the position she had taken, something in him told him, unquestionably, that she had passed entirely beyond his control—that she had freed herself from the power he once had over her. Yet it did not seem possible that he should fail with a mere woman, when so many strong men had given way before any point he had been determined to press.

"I am not quite prepared," said he, "for the course of argument you present—and the personal references you make to myself are certainly not flattering. However, I feel that I must remind you of one very essential point which you omit, a point I feel that I have some right to insist upon. I love you. You are necessary to my happiness, and I cannot allow you to withdraw yourself from my life." He almost believed, as he spoke these words, that they would affect Helen as he intended they should. She saw by the determined expression which his strong, practical face wore, and by the erectness with which he continued to hold himself, that his purpose was very firm, and that he had no thought of yielding.

"I am sorry," she replied, her tone less sympathetic than it had been in the beginning of their conversation. "I do not wish to bring you any pain—and I do not wish to appear ungrateful for

what you have done for me. My determination, however, is taken ; and it is unalterable. I am here only to tell you of this, that you may understand, and that there may be no further talk of the subject. I did not come to discuss it."

"But I insist upon your discussing it," he replied. "I insist upon the point I have made—that you should consider *me* in this matter. If you hold my happiness entirely in your hands, I take it that you owe me a debt—that you have no right to withdraw yourself from me—to rob me of the only true pleasure life holds for me, simply to test a theory of yours—to work out something you choose to look upon as a moral regeneration. I tell you it is all nonsense!" he said sternly, drawing nearer to Helen. "You owe me a certain debt. I have the right to demand its payment of you. If you think so much of justice, there are more accounts to settle than the one you are keeping with your husband!" A note of scorn was in his tone; drawing nearer to her, standing so that he could easily touch or grasp her hand, he continued: "You belong to me! You belong to me!" he threw the words fiercely into her very face. "You yielded yourself to me when you were in need, because you found that I would come to your rescue—and now that you weary of the bargain, and when you have become essential to *me*—you think to take the matter wholly into your own hands, and go your own gait to please yourself. But I will not permit it. No, no, Mrs. Galbraith," said Westmore with a piercing laugh, "the old fox is far too wily for that kind of a game!"

"You are speaking to me unjustly, and you know

it!" said Helen with the greatest dignity of manner and positiveness of tone.

"Every word I have spoken to you is true," he exclaimed, "true—and if you have any sense of gratitude, any sense of appreciation, you will forget all the things you have just said, and will behave yourself like a sensible woman."

"I shall never forget the things I have just said, and what I am doing is the first sensible, sane thing I have done for months. If you prefer to misunderstand me, I have nothing further to say." Putting her hand in her coat-pocket, she drew forth the key to her workroom.

"This," said she," is the key to the room which you had arranged for me and put at my service. I am sure it was you who did this. It was done in kindness, I know, and I thank you. As I shall have no further use for the key, I surrender it to you." She held it up that he might take it. Instead of this, he leaned forward and struck it from between her fingers and it fell with a sharp sound upon the polished floor of the room. For a moment both remained silent.

"That, then is your reply?" said Helen, pointing to the key, and looking searchingly at Mr. Westmore for his answer.

"Yes!" he said, "with the advice that it is not wise to carry this test too far. I have a marvelous amount of patience—within bounds there is nothing I would not do for you; but at no time has my taste for nonsense, for sentimentality been great!" Helen moved away from him as far as the walls of the room would permit. She stood near the door.

"Mr. Westmore," she said, "you are making a difficult situation far more difficult for me. There is but one thing for you to comprehend. I have committed a great sin. I am determined to deliver my life from any future contact with it. I came in person to tell you this, because I did not wish you to think me weak or ungrateful. I feel, I assure you, the kindness of what you have done for me. I do you the justice to perceive that you would do still greater things for me, if I could accept them on your terms. I tell you this to show you that I do appreciate—that I do feel, you have done all you could, according to your view of my case. But here the matter must end for all time. If I have done you any injury—and I am sure that I have, for I have lowered your standard of womanhood—I ask your forgiveness. I would remove the injury if I could; but it must remain a part of those other things which can never be requited in this life. I can only say that I deeply regret it. This is all." She placed her hand upon the knob of the door, but Mr. Westmore sprang forward and seized her by the shoulders; turning her violently about, he forced her to face him.

"Woman!" he cried. "Woman! What are you doing! Do you not know that I mean what I say, that you are essential to me!" He held her firmly in his unrelaxing grasp, and fixing her attention with the fierceness of his gaze, he waited for her reply—hoping it might give him some sign of weakness, of yielding, on her part. But she remained perfectly calm, perfectly composed. Her voice was steady and determined as she replied:

"You must let me go. There is no other way."

For a moment his grasp tightened upon her shoulders—then removing his hands, he thrust her from him against the door.

"Go then!" he said. "But you will never hoodwink Sherman Elliott as you have done me! That position on the paper ends with to-day!" This he felt to be his strongest card, and he had reserved it for the end; he thought that if anything would bring her back to him, this would. The violence of the thrust which he had given her unsteadied her for a moment, but she recovered herself quickly, and she seemed very tall and thin and white, as she replied:

"That position on the paper is already ended. An hour before coming here I wrote to Mr. Elliott. I told him everything. I withdrew myself absolutely from his employ, and begged of him not to seek me out—to let me go in peace."

"You told him *everything*, did you!" exclaimed Westmore with horror, thinking only of the part he was to play in this revelation.

"Yes," she replied. "I regretted to have to bring you in to anything of this kind, but it was unavoidable. I could not explain the matter without telling just how I had procured the place with him—but I insisted that the sin connected with it had all been my fault—all my own weakness. I also asked him especially, for the sake of what he and his wife represent to me—for they represent perfect justice and wisdom and love—not to let what I had told him affect severely his judgment of you. I do not think you need fear any injustice from Mr. Elliott."

"Then you have done your worst!" said Mr. Westmore, sinking into the nearest chair, and giving himself up to despair. He recognized that he was beaten, and beaten in a horrible manner, which he had never thought of as possible. Westmore had no scruples against dishonest conduct; but to have the true inwardness of such conduct laid bare to others—to be made for them a subject of discussion, of this he had a complete, unutterable horror.

"You have ruined me, you have completely ruined me!" cried Westmore from his collapsed position. "There will be a great break between Elliott and myself; and of course he will tell his friends why; but supposing he does not, I shall lose him, anyhow, I am sure. Without Elliott," he added dejectedly, "I shall be shorn of half my power."

"I am very sorry," said Helen, "but I could not act differently. From my point of view I owed Mr. Elliott a full, unreserved confession. I could not give this without bringing you into the matter. But I did all I could to incline Mr. Elliott towards a correct understanding of your position."

"If I had to go over all this ground again," she continued, "I could not act differently. My only aim has been to come out into the light when it invited me—to act honestly before it was too late." Westmore could not possibly understand her point of view, and his principal thought now in regard to her was that any woman who voluntarily criminates herself must be a fool. As to the position in which she had placed him, he was very angry—the more so, because he felt that for the first time in his life

he was utterly helpless—none of his former devices would be of any avail in this emergency.

"I want you to know that I am very sorry for you, Mr. Westmore," said Helen. "I wish that I could help you: but I do not see how I can!"

She paused a moment before going, waiting for his reply. He looked up at her. She was indeed beautiful and fair, standing there, apart from him. He could not hate her, for, after all, she was too desirable to him; but he was thoroughly angry with her, and had he dared he would have done her some kind of physical violence. As it was, he only said:

"Of course, any man who is weak enough to trust his fate in the hands of a woman, should expect nothing more than a result like this." He turned and looked out of the open window; the May air seemed to him no longer sweet and soft and alluring. He heard the door open and close, and he knew that Helen Galbraith had gone out of his life forever. For the first time the thought came to him that he was getting to be a weak, old man, with whom a beautiful woman might play at her pleasure. In the past he had completely mastered every woman with whom he had had any kind of intimate association; and the present failure made him feel that he must be fast losing control of himself, fast becoming inane and imbecile. It did not occur to him that this time he had matched himself against a moral force far beyond his power of comprehension; that he had brought himself into contact with human nature at a point entirely unexplored and unperceived by him. Of Helen's moral scruples he

could make nothing. He thought of her now as having thrown away the chance of a lifetime. His own support would be withdrawn from her—and the Elliotts would of course drop her completely—nor was it likely, he thought, that that "cad of a Tompson" could be relied upon to do much in a practical way for Galbraith. He could not see how Helen was ever to rise out of the trouble into which she had plunged herself.

Out of the trouble into which she had plunged *him*, he was determined to escape with as whole a skin as possible. Nevertheless, he knew very well that Sherman Elliott would come down pretty hard on him, for he was aware that his editor friend had not the smallest sympathy or condonation to offer for just the kind of offense of which he had been guilty. Had it been possible, he would have simplified things for himself by taking the next day's steamer for Europe. For the first time in years he had so arranged his matters that he could spend the coming summer in America—and simply to be near Helen Galbraith! What a fool he had been! As he thought of his affairs he saw how it would be impossible at present for him to run away merely upon a few hours' notice. His many important investments could not be left as they now stood. Plainly, there was nothing for him to do but to remain, to face Sherman Elliott and his indignation, and to save himself as far as possible by representing Helen as a conscienceless tempter from whom no man she sought to ensnare could possibly escape. Men, he felt, should understand and sympathize with one another in such matters; and he thought

with some scorn of a man like Sherman Elliott, possessed of the finest physical strength and robustness, going about the world with that aloofness of his and making of himself a genuine Sir Galahad. Such a man was incomprehensible to him, and suggested only weakness and hypocrisy. Yet he knew in his heart that he feared Elliott's judgment, and that he was not worthy to stand beside him in any of the great matters which make true, manly life.

CHAPTER VI.

A VINDICTIVE spirit had taken possession of Andrew Tompson, and for several days this had been apparent even to his mother. There often crept into her heart a regret that she and her son lived so entirely apart, each counting for so little in the real life of the other. It is possible that had he admitted her to a more intimate relationship with himself, matters might have been very different in their little domestic world. Certainly it would have been better for Tompson. Close association with a generous-spirited woman like his mother would necessarily have affected beneficially his own cold nature—it would have made it less possible for him to encourage himself in small vanities and conceits; it would, partially at least, have checked his innate tendency toward selfishness. The culture of the heart would, also, have given him a better comprehension of the true spirit of art. He had relied upon knowledge and travel to develop in him a clear understanding of art; it had not occurred to him that the divine inspiration, out of which its creation had been wrought, is most closely related to human sympathy and affection.

The month of May seldom found Mrs. Tompson in town, but this year she had not withdrawn herself as usual, for she perceived that something was vitally wrong with her son. As she expected,

he had refused to say anything about his troubles. but, in her anxiety for him, she had remained near him—making suggestions of this trip or that, in the hope that she might influence him to go away somewhere. For several days Tompson had seemed so annoyed, so entirely out of patience in regard to everything, that his mother could no longer refrain from questioning him. One morning, when they were taking their breakfast together, she said :

"It is rather late, is it not, to have made no plans for your summer?" Mrs. Tompson had just poured her son a second cup of coffee, and while administering to it the one lump of sugar which he invariably took, she asked her question, not very sure, however, of the wisdom of doing so.

"Well, yes, possibly," Tompson replied, employing himself in breaking apart a piece of dry toast, and without looking up. Certainly, the conversation had not opened propitiously ; but Mrs. Tompson was emboldened to pursue it a little further, as she observed the very anxious and absorbed manner of her son.

"I should like to go away this week, if I felt sure about you," she continued. In making her plans his mother very seldom waited for him, and it surprised Tompson now to learn that she was doing so. He looked up and was annoyed to see an expression of anxiety stamped upon her usually serene face. For a moment he watched her, continuing at the same time to drink his coffee, and when he had finished it and put down his cup, he replied, somewhat impatiently :

"Now, my dear mother, that is all nonsense.

Just make your own plans as usual, and leave me to do the same."

"But I feel that you are not well this year, Andrew," protested Mrs. Tompson, using now a more positive tone with her son than she was in the habit of doing.

"I am quite well, I assure you, mother. I have only had an abominably dull winter, that is all."

"Then, why not try a change?"

"Oh, I will! Possibly I'll go to Norway a little later." And with this reply it was evident Tompson meant to close the conversation; for he rose abruptly from the table, without excusing himself, and going over to a rear window in the dining-room, commenced to look out upon the well-arranged flower-garden into which his mother had transformed their back premises. Mrs. Tompson finished her breakfast in silence, reflecting a little upon the questionable felicity of passing life alone with an only and bachelor son. However, when she rose also from the table, she walked over to the same window before which her son stood, apparently contemplating the results of her skill as a gardener. She waited a few moments before saying: "I wish, my dear, that you *would* arrange to go away this week. I feel sure it would do you good; and it would relieve my own mind very much." This was extremely authoritative ground for Mrs. Tompson to take, but she was genuinely annoyed about him, and so determined to urge his going away, even if he should consider it in the light of an interference. To her great surprise and relief Tompson took her request very quietly.

"Well, I'll see if I can manage it," he said. After this he passed out of the door, and she heard him ascend the stairs to his own rooms. Satisfied with the result of the interview, Mrs. Tompson turned her attention to her other duties for the day, which, considering the approaching warm weather, and the many fresh air charities to be arranged in consequence, she found rather arduous and absorbing.

It was a radiant day—the very one which Helen Galbraith was passing at the Museum. Tompson did not spend much time in his rooms this morning; after writing a few important letters, he went out.

"The best thing," he said to himself, "is to get it over—now that I have determined what to do—and then I may be free to get away, which will please my mother." Tompson had finally persuaded himself into a very self-righteous frame of mind. He had determined to render to Galbraith a genuinely friendly service,—such he had forced himself to consider it—and he had determined to render it to-day, in order to arrange his matters to suit his mother. What he wished was in some way to punish Helen Galbraith for her unjust treatment of himself. To enlighten Galbraith as to his wife's conduct would be the surest way of reaching his end—and a high motive too might guide him, he reasoned with himself, for, if a man knows aught against his friend's wife, is it not his duty to reveal all his knowledge to that friend? His mother's anxiety to get away, and yet her delay on his account, made it incumbent upon him to act at once. It would be impossible for him

to go anywhere, he forced himself to feel, until he had discharged this duty to Galbraith. When he had gotten well through this obligation, he would be free to take ship and sail away somewhere—to Norway, most probably, as he was developing a taste for Norwegian art.

What was to become of Galbraith, the poor, dying, armless artist, his faith in his wife destroyed for him by his best friend, he did not ask himself. If Tompson cared about this—and he must have cared, if only a little, for he was not a monster, merely a cold, selfish, revengeful man—he did not permit himself to think of it from this standpoint. He allowed himself to think only of how to carry out successfully the purpose he had formed; and pursuing his way undeviatingly toward this end, he reached the cottage just in time to share Galbraith's luncheon with him. It was fully two weeks since Tompson had been to the cottage, and Galbraith in that time had lost a great deal in the way of strength and vitality. This was quickly apparent to Tompson; but his observation of the fact did not influence him regarding the purpose which he cherished in his heart. He found that Jane had provided an omelette and hot biscuits, and being invited to share them, sat down composedly to the meal. Jane, who had learned from Helen the art of feeding Galbraith, remained in the room until the two men had finished their luncheon, and during this time they confined their talk to unimportant, general matters.

"Why not spend one summer in America," asked Galbraith, when Tompson mentioned his proposed

trip to Norway, "and put in a part of the time tramping along the course of its smaller rivers? Upon my return to America I had intended spending many summers in this way."

"I am not quite sure that I am robust enough for that sort of thing—and then it is not to my taste quite so much as a different kind of travel," replied Tompson.

"But it is just the thing that would develop you physically," said Galbraith. "Just the thing to bring you robustness—and then, nothing really equals that kind of pleasure when once one has become adapted to it."

"I have tried it once or twice, but with poor success. I always ended by taking a railway carriage at the first convenient station, and returning to civilization in just the style the most respectable philistine would adopt."

"Oh, you only pretend to the artistic temperament, Tompson!" said Galbraith laughingly. "You really haven't a suggestion of the genuine thing, you know, or you would yearn for something which cities and respectability can never give you. Then if you think of health, of physical strength, there is nothing which will bring it to you like tramping."

"I am a good and steady walker," protested Tompson, "and I suppose I get about as much health and pleasure out of it as most men do, but I want it to be along even, well-trodden ways." By this time Jane had taken away the remains of the luncheon, and Tompson, lighting the eternal cigarette, sat down very near an open window, feeling the need of all the fresh air he could get; for the

purpose of his visit had commenced to oppress him, and to give him a heavy, dull sensation about the heart. Galbraith meant much more to him than people usually did and, observing his broken appearance, Tompson commenced to question, if, after all, he would be able to bring himself to deal the blow which he contemplated? He realized, however, that he had still plenty of time in which to decide, for Galbraith had informed him of Helen's absence for the day. Giving himself up, therefore, for the time being to the influence of his cigarette, he listened to Galbraith's conversation in a half-responsive kind of mood.

"Walking," said Galbraith, "used to be one of my chief delights—walking in the country—exploring hidden by-ways, unknown regions, and difficult ravines or cliffs. But it is not the walking merely which brings you the greatest pleasure," he continued, "it is, as some one has said, in keeping yourself in tune for the walk—in keeping your senses open to all the various objects of nature with which you meet, so that your spirit may be quickened by these influences which of all influences the most readily establish a direct, simple relationship between yourself and the outside world."

"Well, yes," replied Tompson in that half-responsive tone which indicated perfectly his mood, "but the influences which represent other things—other forces—for instance, the more subtle forces belonging to high orders of civilization—these touch and affect me most readily and most vitally. I find in them, too, most that is companionable, most that is individual."

"Now, Tompson," said Galbraith falling into something like his old-time, enthusiastic form of speech, "that is simply because you do not really know what it is to be wrought upon by the spiritual side of nature. If you talk about companionable things, what is so intensely human, so companionable among all inanimate things as a river, with a life and character and voice of its own?"

"I admit there is much charm in rivers, but we, I am sure, are viewing them from different points of observation. I like to sail upon them—to watch their ebb and flow—under comfortable circumstances. You like to scramble along their banks, to get into the most intimate relation with what I might call, for want of a better term, their domestic side."

"You have summed it up very well—very well indeed," responded Galbraith with a low, amused laugh. "Yes, that is it, the only way to discover the hidden, finest beauties of nature is to get behind the scenes."

"Possibly," replied Tompson, "but I am not much of a person for that kind of thing, so I suppose I am not capable of judging. I am not a bit interested in the processes of development either in art, or nature, or human life. Results—final, complete results—interest me; for these I have a taste."

"But you are missing the essence of things, my dear man, in sticking so persistently to this method of yours. All the personal, confidential things pass you by. You must get down to an every-day plane of living with nature and with art, as you would

with a friend, if you wish to be in touch with their most delicate, their most suggestive qualities. When you are able to do this, you will easily find the whole world enveloped in beauty—it will be like a renewal of the charms of your youth."

Tompson was lighting another cigarette, but he was unable longer to remain quietly in his seat. Getting up, he walked up and down the floor several times; and Galbraith commenced to perceive that something unusual was distressing him. No one in all the world possessed a more sympathetic, responsive heart than did Galbraith, when another's trouble was a matter of real, vital concern. As he observed Tompson now, he could not refrain from saying:

"You seem troubled, Andrew. Is there anything—anything, I can clear up?" Galbraith very seldom used Tompson's Christian name in speaking to him, and it struck Tompson that it indicated much tenderness and concern on Galbraith's part. For a moment he wavered. Galbraith, he knew, when he had once given his confidence, was genuinely sympathetic, was the truest, most devoted of friends;—could he hurt him, could he grieve him as he intended doing? But Helen Galbraith had scorned and spurned him—had done so at the very time when he was offering to sacrifice himself, and save her from the consequences of her own deeds. Certainly, he argued, he owed something to himself, to his own pride—when such an indignity had been put upon him. He thought a moment, closely, seriously, then decided that he had no right to lose this golden opportunity of revenging himself, now

that Galbraith had spoken and made an opening of the subject easy for him. Besides, he continued to argue, he owed Galbraith something—he owed him much—they had been friends long before either one of them had ever known Helen. Encouraging this self-righteous frame of mind, he concluded that he would take the bit between his teeth and go straight ahead to his object. If after this he had any compunction remaining in him, it was entirely destroyed by the answer which Galbraith made to a question Tompson put to him in reply to the one Galbraith had just asked.

"What do you think," said Tompson, "of the duty of a man who knows something vitally important to his best friend, but of which this friend is ignorant;—do you think he should put his friend in possession of this information, even when he knows it would pain and grieve him?"

"If it is something which his friend should know—something without a knowledge of which his manhood would suffer—then there can be no question, I should think. He is under obligation to tell his friend what he knows."

"Some things, however, are very delicate, very hard to handle in their right relations," replied Tompson, more to gain time than for any other reason.

"It has always seemed to me that there are some great certainties the soundness of which nothing can alter. When we try to alter these we only play at hide-and-seek with truth."

"Is there anything," asked Tompson, again seeking to gain time before taking the final leap, "any-

thing too sacred in individual life for close friends to speak of between themselves?"

"Nothing, I should say," replied Galbraith, "when they perfectly comprehend each other and have earnestly at heart each other's interests."

"Then I shall speak candidly and fully!" exclaimed Tompson. He took his stand before Galbraith, and fastened upon him a pair of cold, penetrating eyes. But he did not speak at once. For a moment or two he waited, yet only in order to shape his first sentence into such words as would convey most nicely a general idea of the subject he had before him. Then plunging relentlessly into the full current of the stream, Tompson gave Galbraith the whole, hideous story, before the latter could rally himself, or take in the purport of what was being told him. When he did comprehend, the thought flashed through his mind that Andrew Tompson had gone insane. Nothing but violent, irresponsible insanity could account for such conduct as his. Yet looking at him, Galbraith could see no visible signs of insanity about him—even his nervousness had disappeared now that he had got well through the recital he had set himself to make. His face, however, it seemed to Galbraith, had taken on that hardness and severity of expression gained only by some faces after a lifetime of selfishness and cruelty.

"I suppose," said Galbraith, "that you consider yourself responsible for what you have just said—that I am not to look upon you in the light of an insane person?"

"Entirely," replied Tompson. "I am prepared

to give you actual proof of all I charge, if you will permit me." Light was breaking about Galbraith. He commenced to feel that, after all, Helen had been the just one in her estimate of Tompson, and he the duped one.

"And you have done all of this—you have doubted my wife and spied upon her—and created a story of hideous guilt concerning her—all of this you have done for love of me, I am to understand, am I?" said Galbraith. He rose as he spoke, and his manner and tone became so menacing that Tompson instinctively retreated a step or two.

"You, yourself gave me permission to speak," he stammered, for Galbraith's words placed his conduct in a light which did not attract him.

"Yes, to be sure—from your standpoint," replied Galbraith, "but that piece of deceit is like the rest which seems to have distinguished you in this matter."

"Certainly," protested Tompson, "the long years of friendship between us made me owe you much."

"Yes—much!—much!" cried Galbraith, taking the very word out of his mouth, as he stepped forward a few paces. His armless body seemed now no longer shrunken and worn, as he threw himself back to the fulness of his fine height. The fire of a splendid scorn, of a boundless contempt, shone from every feature of his strong face, as his excitement rose. Indeed, so like an avenging god did he seem, as he advanced upon Tompson, that the latter retreated step by step before him.

"You owe me much indeed!" continued Galbraith.—"Much indeed! You owe me loyalty, and

faith, and truthfulness--and in all of these you have failed! I shall not reproach you—a man who can be guilty of such conduct as yours is, I consider, impervious to reproach. Some day you will find your own punishment. Were I not armless I might strike you to the earth, and so build about you a still greater monument of guilt. However, I am spared this sin by my own condition. It occurs to me that you might not have dared to come to me with the kind of story you have brought, had I possessed the physical powers to deal with you as men in a case of this sort deal with one another. This is just the kind of cowardice one naturally expects from a man who would do the things you have done. But I shall not speak of revenge. I am a man too near the grave for that—I shall leave the settlement of that to a higher power. But," he continued in a voice of such force and violence, that Tompson withdrew still further from him, "there *is* something I can settle!—Something I can do!—You shall promise me," as he spoke he had followed Tompson, who was now crouching against the wall upon which hung the copy of Bouguereau's La Vierge Consolatrice, which so resembled Helen—"You shall promise me," repeated Galbraith, "that this is the last time, as you say it is the first, this story is to be told to a human ear! If you do not promise, there will be found those to avenge who will not spare you! Do you hear me and do you promise?" Galbraith thundered the words into Tompson's ears, pressing him violently against the wall as he made his demand.

"Yes, oh, yes! I promise! I promise!" So

great had Galbraith's wrath become, that Tompson feared, despite his opponent's armless condition, he might yet find some means of breaking his head, then and there, did he not commit himslef to the promise required of him.

"Well, then," said Galbraith, releasing Tompson from the close quarters into which he had pressed him, "there is one thing more. I want you to understand that I do not believe one word of what you have told me—*not one word!* I am sure of Helen. I believe absolutely in her purity and fidelity—and I do not wish to be misunderstood about this." For a moment the two men looked squarely into each other's eyes—Galbraith wishing that Tompson might read in his the complete and perfect trust which he intended his words to convey, and Tompson wondering if it were an honest faith which Galbraith had expressed, or only one assumed to bluff and deceive him. This close scrutiny of the two men lasted only a few moments; then the silence which had accompanied it was broken by Galbraith, as he said:

"There can be nothing further between us, so far as I can see. I wish no explanation from you; therefore but one thing remains for you—to go out of that door—out of this house—and never to enter it again."

"You have wilfully misunderstood me!" protested Tompson.

"I tell you that I will have no explanation from you. I only ask you to leave me—and to leave me at once!" Galbraith did not move as he spoke these words—he held himself erect and calm, the perfect

impersonation of outraged dignity and defiant manhood. In the presence of such dignity, of such conscious power, Tompson could no longer stand. Something very like a sob escaped him, cold, selfish man that he was, as he realized how recklessly, how foolishly, he had thrown away the confidence and friendship of that man before him. Indignant, mortified, stunned, enraged against himself, recognizing his own defeat, Andrew Tompson bowed his head and in silence passed out of the room.

For a few moments Galbraith stood as Tompson had left him—then moving toward his chair and falling into it, his head sank heavily upon his chest. The strain through which he had just passed had been very great; and, to meet it, he had summoned to his aid all his remaining physical and intellectual strength. For half an hour he had been like one through whom an electric current is passed—every nerve, every sense vibrating and alive to its uttermost possibility. Now that the pressure had been removed his whole being succumbed to an extreme lassitude, which would have seemed akin to death to any one looking in upon him. Nature, through her inflexible laws, was seeking to readjust the balance of life which, in Galbraith's case, had just been so violently disturbed—to do this Nature was to make a hard and strenuous fight. Certainly, for a short while Galbraith lay in an entirely unconscious state, for when the conscious action of his mind was restored, he could not determine at first where he was, or what had happened to him. By degrees the realization came to him, that he was in his own home

—in the very room, which Helen and himself loved so well—and in his own chair, near the open window, through which he could feel the soft May air stealing. In the kitchen he heard the voice of Jane, as she sung a low-toned song over her duties—and he remembered, that, after luncheon, she had gone out and left him alone with Andrew Tompson. He opened his eyes and looked about the room, thinking possibly Tompson might still be there; but as his eye took in the familiar pieces of furniture, the books and the pictures so well known to him—the whole scene of an hour before came back; he remembered that Tompson had gone away in obedience to his own orders, and that he had looked at him sorrowfully and appealingly as he had passed out of the room. Perhaps, it occurred to him, Tompson might not be far distant yet; if he could but go to the front door, he might call him back, and send him away less dejected. Poor Tompson! he would call him back, and try to show him better things than those he had fed his mind upon! In order to realize his wish Galbraith attempted to rise from his chair, but something seemed to bind him to it. For some reason he could not move his legs, and his shoulders seemed pressed back and fastened to the cushions against which they rested. He made a movement as if to stretch out his arms, and get hold of a straight-backed chair in front of him, which he thought would support him, if he could but reach it. But, strange thing! his arms were useless too—and besides, they seemed so numb and dead! *What* had happened to his arms! And his whole body, why was that so powerless, why did every limb seem bound by cords

which he could not break? Nothing about him was alive and active, but his mind—and that was partially surrounded by a mist—things came to him more as dreams than as realities. After a time Jane came in and looked at him, and thinking him asleep, withdrew very quietly. He was conscious of her presence, but he could not speak. He realized his helplessness, but it did not trouble him. Other things now took possession of his semi-alive mind. A little boy was lying in the long, lush grass in an old garden—the sun was going down in royal splendor in the west. The boy sprang to his feet, tried to grasp with his hands, to breathe into his soul the beauty of the world about him. Then he fell back upon the ground and wept for a long while, wept from a mere sense of the joy that filled him. The twilight crept on—the outlines of the garden, of the fields beyond, of the forest on the hill—these faded away; but there rose before the boy's vision a greater world than the one which had just sunk to rest—it was the world of his own imagination. Thereafter he lived in this world—surrounded always by beauty—seeing it everywhere, in everything, great or small. Often wonderful thoughts came to him—such thoughts as other children seemed not to understand, and so he lived much apart—walking alone in the fields, penetrating unobserved to remote parts of the forest, and finding in the rippling stream which flowed near his home far sweeter companionship than that which the boys of his own age gave him. At last, however, this boy learned the value of friendship—a little girl revealed it to him. A wee thing she was, with

golden hair and an angel face, who came sometimes to play at his side and who, wondering at the strange ways of the quiet boy, followed him admiringly from pursuit to pursuit. It was his first knowledge of the feminine heart, that which this innocent, sweet-faced child brought to him—and always he had cherished it—and later, when an advanced boyhood had revealed to him the meaning of maternity and he had partially comprehended how much suffering it stood for, from that time to the present, womanhood had been to him the most sacred, the most choice of God's creations. There also came dreams of other things—dreams of student days—when ambition and aspiration swept him along, carrying him from strength to strength, from success to success. Always onward he seemed to go—pressing forward to some great achievement—the world of beauty ever surrounding and enveloping him, stimulating him to purity and greatness of life. Those days of high aspiration, of strenuous effort, of simple, sweet, direct living!—the dream of them swept through his mind now—and he no longer tried to rise. He lay as quiet and submissive as the weakest child could have been—and this world and the present things of it passed entirely away from him.

Like an angel presence, hovering near him, pressing her lips to his, he was conscious all the while of Helen. She was the central figure in his dreams—but he could not speak to her—could not tell her the things he longed to tell her. He could do nothing further than lie there and dream—and wait for Helen to lift him up. Surely, she would put her

hands under him and do this for him before very long—and then he would dream no more; but would come back to his ordinary life and to a direct relationship with her and with the things about him. In a way he continued to retain a sense of what he had just heard, but that too became as a dream—an ugly dream, which every now and then returned and destroyed the beauty of his other dreams. He was sure that it was but a dream! And as the moments passed, and his consciousness became dimmer and dimmer, all memory of what had been told him faded away—and he dreamed only of one woman—the one serene and high and holy—his Vierge Consolatrice, who had surrounded his life with love and sweetness and devotion.

As Helen pursued her way from New York city to the Jersey side she was conscious of a certain buoyancy of spirit. At last she had unloosed the bonds which bound and restrained her. The fight had been terrible. It had required a supreme kind of courage to do what she had done. She had not unfalteringly mounted the higher ground on which she now stood. At times it had been very doubtful to her own mind whether she should mount at all. Frequently in seeking to justify the course she had taken she had fallen back upon the consolation, "other heights in other lives," striving to believe that she did well to pause where she was. But the force of her spiritual nature was greater than even she herself had realized it to be. Against all

seeking of her own had she been driven forward —forced upward—her vision clearing with each advance.

The strain of the day had been very great, and Helen was grateful for the hour which her journey home required. What a load was lifted from her shoulders! Once again she had the right to look out towards the future. Once again it was permitted her to return to Galbraith in honesty and sincerity. In some way, she believed, she would be able to provide for him. Some path would open before her—some work be given her to do.

"Why! why!" she could not refrain from asking herself, "had she not been able months ago to exercise such faith as this—why had she then so mistaken her way and laid up to her account all the guilt of the past?" Of course, there was still much bitterness in such questions as these. She was too fresh from the strife for this not to be so. But now she was free! free! and she had delivered herself by the strength of her own hand! What joy, what gladness, what hope this meant, none but those who have been bound can know!

But before Helen could give herself up completely to her new life and to the joy born of it, there remained one other step for her to take; the hardest of all. It was necessary that she should tell Galbraith even more than she had told Mr. Elliott. It may seem strange that she did not feel any fear of doing this. She felt a reluctance, but no fear. She understood, as no one else had ever understood, the magnanimity of Galbraith's soul. She saw clearly that her sin was a thing calculated to affect Gal-

braith more seriously than it would have done most men; but she knew also that he would be able, as few men could ever be able, to appreciate the mistaken motive which had guided her. Besides, she believed that he would sympathetically comprehend the agony, the despair to which she had subjected herself. It was a terrible, almost a deadly thing, to inflict upon him in his weak condition a knowledge of all these things. Yet she could find no other way. It seemed to her as necessary for him as for herself. And she believed, when once Galbraith had comprehended all, that his great heart would envelope her in such love, that for them would wipe away and redeem absolutely the past.

When Helen reached her station she was more tired and weary than she had realized; in her eagerness to get home, she took the most direct path thither across the meadows. A soft aspect spread itself over earth and sky. There was a mellow splendor in the evening sun, which touched the woodland above the hill, making it glow with richness and depth. A magical cadence set Helen's thoughts to the movement and mood of the scene. Mounting the slope above the meadows, she stood at last before her own gate. The sky, bare from horizon to horizon, with its infinite depths of color, its sublime serenity, its profound silence, seemed a true symbol of God's greatness and power. For a moment she stood looking above and beyond. A spirit of worship filled her soul. Something told her—something which she dare not question—that she was absolved; and that, after all, great suffering was worth the while. Then turning away from the

glorious promise of summer which the whole earth seemed to express—from the radiant splendor of the air, hoping great things, believing great things, convinced of the complete surrender of her own will, she passed into the cottage.

CHAPTER VII.

"JANE! Jane!"

Jane ran forward to meet her mistress, whose tone struck her as unusual and alarming. "When were you last in this room?" asked Helen excitedly.

"A half-hour ago, I think, Mrs. Galbraith." The girl saw at once that something was wrong.

"Did you call Mr. Galbraith then?" asked Helen.

"No, madam. I looked in upon him several times this afternoon, and every time he was sleeping, so I did not disturb him."

"When did you first notice his sleeping?" Helen moved toward Galbraith, while Jane followed her closely and attentively.

"Why, only a short while after Mr. Tompson went away," replied the girl.

"Then Mr. Tompson has been here, has he?" Helen asked somewhat sharply, turning and looking anxiously at Jane.

"Why, yes, madam, I thought perhaps you knew he was coming," replied Jane. "He came just in time for luncheon. Mr. Galbraith and himself had it together—then I left them alone."

"How long do you think Mr. Tompson stayed?" asked Helen.

"About an hour, I should say. They seemed to talk a great deal. I could hear them from the kitchen—it almost sounded as if they were having

words over something. Then Mr. Tompson went away, and after a little I looked in on Mr. Galbraith, but he seemed so quiet that I did not like to disturb him."

"I do not believe you could have disturbed him," said Helen. She was leaning now over Galbraith's relaxed body. Placing her fingers on his bare throat, she sought to discover if any pulse was still beating there. In a few moments she traced along the muscular part of the neck a steady, but very slow beat; the intervals between each beat grew perceptibly longer and longer.

"Come, Jane," she said, having assured herself that some life still remained in Galbraith, "let this chair down while I steady him. Be careful now! Not too suddenly! That is right. Now give me those cushions over there—and here—lift up his head while I arrange them. There that will do! that is comfortable! And so Mr. Tompson was here!" The last remark was not put as a question, but Jane replied:

"Yes, madam, he was here."

"Well, it does not signify." She spoke as if she thought herself alone, and all the while she was loosening Galbraith's garments.

"Alex! Alex!" She put her lips close to his ear as she spoke these words. She commenced to rub different parts of his body, but the only sign which he gave was to breathe a little more heavily, as if a dim consciousness stirred in him.

"Alex! Alex!" But the faint echo of her own words died away without response.

"There is nothing we can do, Jane. Go for

William Johnston and send him at once into Newark for a doctor, the best one he can find."

When Helen was left alone she paused for the first time since coming into the house to give herself some attention. She took off her hat and coat and threw them upon the center-table; in doing so she noticed several ends of cigarettes in the ash receiver, evidently left there by Tompson that afternoon. He smoked them so incessantly, especially when he was talking with Galbraith, that the mere sight and odor of them seemed to bring his bodily presence before her. She turned away in disgust, and going over to Galbraith kneeled beside him. Removing his shoes, she commenced to stroke his feet, which seemed to her cold and lifeless beyond all restoration.

"So Andrew Tompson was here!" she said reflectively. "He and Alex talked a great deal—had hard words over something."

The window near Galbraith's reclining chair was open. Through it came the evening air, spreading its sweetness about the room. A few faint stars had become visible, but the light which shone from them was not sufficient to penetrate the cottage. As the shadows gathered it seemed to Helen that she sat alone in impenetrable darkness. The moments seemed like hours, as she waited—waited she knew not for what. She realized that she was hoping against all hope, against all possibility. An overpowering sense of the realities of existence came over her now as she sat alone in the silence and the darkness, at the feet of her dying husband. This then was to be the final act in the great drama of

her soul—an infinite appeal to the new faith which was in her. The great wings of hope, which but an hour ago she had dared to stretch out for a limitess flight, must now be folded forever. Against this terrible doom she was powerless. There lay Galbraith, and here was she by his side; but no words could they speak to one another. This, then, was the fate she must accept—the last great trial she must pass through. Of all the awful moments of her life, these moments of waiting, in the darkness of the silent room, were the most awful. A sudden sense of her supreme loneliness came over her. There was no one to whom she could turn; she was absolutely alone in the world. That very afternoon she had placed an impassable barrier between herself and the only friends to whom she might have turned. She was a part of no one's life and no one was a part of hers. Life could no more wear for her the mask of youth and love. She must simply accept the wreck of a life and do with it what she could. Nothing was left to her—absolutely nothing, but her love for Galbraith, and that now could help her little, because it could no longer avail him anything. Her Calvary, steep as she had planned it, had not contained this final, terrible ascent, which she was now required to make.

"My darling! my darling! Come back to me! Come back to me! I am so alone! I have so much to say to you! So much that you must help me about! My poor, poor boy!" She wrapped her arms about him, seeking to force him back to consciousness by the power of her love and the earnestness of her words. But Galbraith was not even

dreaming his dreams now, and no voice could arouse him. That prescience, which often pierces the mists of death, when they have enveloped one, was gone forever from him.

Jane came back and lighted the lamps, and loyally took her place by Helen's side. It was not possible for them to move Galbraith from the position in which he was, even had Helen thought of attempting it. He seemed now to be slumbering quietly and sweetly. There was no sign of suffering about him. His face was pale and calm, with the pallor and calmness of death, but its expression indicated perfect rest. God, after all, was dealing more kindly with Galbraith than men had done.

With great difficulty Jane induced Helen to take some tea which she prepared for her, and after this Helen sent the girl away. She wanted no one to watch with her. She had not long composed herself to her silent vigil before she heard some one enter the cottage gate. Jane, on the watch for the doctor, heard the same sound, and hastened to the door. A messenger boy stood there, holding a letter in his hand. Jane took the letter and carried it to Helen. Thinking it related to the doctor, Helen hastily tore open the envelope. The enclosure ran:

Thursday, 5 P.M.

"DEAR MRS. GALBRAITH—

By this time, no doubt, you have returned home and heard from your husband an account of the conversation which took place between us this afternoon. I feel I owe it to myself to say to you

that my communication concerning you was made to your husband in perfect good faith. Alex Galbraith has been my friend for too many years for me to feel myself privileged to withhold from him the very serious knowledge which I have obtained regarding your conduct. I am conscious of having deeply offended him ; but I was impelled to do so for his good and your own. In time, I trust, he may come to perceive this ; and I shall rely upon you to aid him in this matter. You, too, may attribute to me false motives ; and while I condemn heartily the course you have chosen to pursue, especially since a *very* different course was open to you, I have still a full confidence in your large powers of perception and penetration. I believe in time you will be able to do me justice, and to look upon me in the light of the true friend I have aimed to be, both to you and Galbraith.

I have formed the plan, in the last hour, of going for a week to Atlantic City—my address will be the Hotel Brighton. If Galbraith has any desire to communicate with me, I can be easily reached at that place. I make this communication to you, as I do not wish it to appear that I am afraid of the consequences of my own conduct. In seeking to make myself available to you, I have, instead of going abroad at once as I had intended, selected Atlantic City as a place where I may experience a change and enjoy the sea, and yet be within reach. The place itself is abominable to me—as are all American resorts—and nothing but my continued desire to serve you and your husband could induce me to endure it for so short a time even as a week.

Hoping that this will convey to you the impression of a sincere intention, I remain yours truly,—

ANDREW TOMPSON."

Something forced Helen to read the letter to the end. When she had finished it, she crushed it in her hands and threw it upon the table; it fell into the ash-tray and covered from sight the bits of cigarettes which Tompson had left behind him. Helen looked very cold and severe as she stood there, in the dim lamplight. A certain scorn of men and of the ordinary conditions of life arose in her heart; for the moment she was at bay against all the world. That will of hers, which an hour or more ago she had believed to be entirely subdued and subject to the will of God, was again seeking to find a way of its own. She needed still to battle with it and conquer it further. Turning to Jane she said:

"Tell the boy there is no answer." The girl went away puzzled.

"So he did it! Andrew Tompson did it! He had killed his friend!" Helen spoke these words aloud—they reverberated through the room, but Galbraith continued to lie silent in his reclining chair. The night looked in upon them, through the open windows: there was a strange, melancholy charm in the soft south wind as it swept over the fields, seeming to make a kind of music—

"Of old, unhappy, far-off things —"

a supreme peace and quiet rested upon everything —upon everything except upon the spirit of the pale,

tall, proud woman, alone on this night with her sorrow and her humiliation.

"No, *he* did not do it!" a voice spoke to her. "Andrew Tompson did not do it. *You did it! You*, his wife, *you*, Helen Galbraith!"

"But he came here," protested Helen, "and talked to Alex in such a way that he could only see my sin, but not my suffering. Ah, my sin is nothing, nothing to the suffering I have endured! If there is any power in the agony of a soul to wipe away guilt, mine should be wiped away!" She turned toward her dying husband, and throwing herself at his feet, all pride, all scorn went out of her. Her dejection and her humiliation became complete.

"My poor boy! My poor boy!" She stroked his limbs with hands which had become almost as cold and rigid as his own feet. "I was so mistaken, sweetheart! I have loved you *so much!* To keep you with me and make you comfortable and happy during your last days, no sacrifice seemed too great! This has been my only wish—this has been all!"

Her head fell upon his body. For a long while, it seemed to her, she remained thus, unable to rise, or to protest further. As she lay there, she could feel distinctly each beat of his heart, and every moment the beats became fewer and fewer, fainter and fainter. Had she possessed the whole world, she would have given it to bring him back to consciousness, if only for one hour, that she might pour out her heart to him and make him understand. It was useless to upbraid or hate Tompson. No matter how contemptible his conduct had been, it lessened in no way her own responsibility; and the

voice speaking in her, resting the sin principally upon her, was right and truthful, she knew. *Yes, she had done it—had killed Galbraith—and she alone!* It was foolish to cry out against fate. This cup of bitterness she had prepared for herself, and she had no right to ask that it should pass from her. To drink it to the very dregs was now all that remained to her, and to do this submissively rested upon her as a final and supreme obligation! To lie still and suffer—to accept the uttermost justice of God's wrath—to achieve a supreme renunciation of self—these things now alone remained to her.

In her exhaustion of soul and body, she must have lost consciousness; for a moment everything was blotted out. With a sudden start she came back to herself and placed her hand upon Galbraith's heart;—it still beat, hesitatingly and slowly. She rose from the kneeling position in which she had remained so long; she went to the window and looked out. The night had become far advanced—the magic of the moon had woven all manners of enchantment about the fields. For a few moments she stood beside the open window, looking out upon the enchanted world before her view, seeking to grasp the thought which then dawned upon her—that the truest life is after all almost unconscious and voiceless.

"Will the doctor never come?" Going over to the lamp she turned its blaze higher that she might be able to see Galbraith's face the better. Lying asleep and calm in the dimly-lighted room, the old charm which had once belonged to his countenance, a peculiar, youthful sweetness, was restored to it.

A realization of all he had intended his life to be came now so forcibly to Helen, that she tried to withdraw herself from facing it—but the thought of him drew her like a magnet, and she had no power to put it out of her mind. The glorious promise of his youth had been the most splendid, the most inspiring thing she had ever known. *What* a life his might have been had he not been denied the living it! What a waste of strength, of originality, of greatness, he and his life seemed to her, as she looked upon him, broken in health and spirit, spent and worn, dying before he was forty years of age. Why, she could not help asking herself, did God permit such things—*why* did He inspire youth with so much hope, so much aspiration, only to send it down to the grave overpowered by failure and by suffering? It was the old question, the old question of doubt and uncertainty, which had for so long haunted her, reappearing now in her heart, when she thought that she was on the verge of putting these things forever away from her. She continued to look at Galbraith, and it was like seeing him in a vision—so near was he to her apparently, yet in reality so beyond her reach. Nothing she could do or say had power to move or affect him. What remained of his physical being seemed now so etherealized, so spiritlike, that she held back from wrapping her arms again about him. Now, for the first time since she had loved him, she viewed him and herself as two beings apart; his world was no longer her world, and the sphere into which he was passing was one whither she could not follow him. His pale face, his motionless form, his still, silent lips, these

told her this with a convincing force not to be questioned, not to be denied. The agony of it seemed to her more than she could endure. Why was she able to sit there, and look upon him thus—passing away from her forever and forever—and yet not die herself of the mere sight? How faint his breath was becoming! She crept closer to him.

"Great God! will the doctor never come!"

It was death—its actual presence—an entirely new experience for her. By slow degrees it came on, more and more surely before her very eyes—the most cruel, the most conscienceless power she had ever come in contact with. This then was the end for which she had lived! The defeat for which she had fought! Was this all? Was this all? Was there nothing further to be got out of life—nothing else to be learned by suffering? "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." She sat still and listened as these words came to her. A voice spoke the words to her a second time: then all was silence in her heart. Unconsciously she fell upon her knees, she embraced Galbraith's motionless limbs, her head fell against his breast.

"*God help me! help me!*"

Her arms loosened their hold and she sank, broken, vanquished upon the floor.

Helen's suspended powers came back to her slowly. When they did so, she saw that Jane stood by her, seeking in some way to help and comfort her. To get Helen to do something practical was the only thing for her now—even the servant girl felt this—so she went to work refilling the hot-water bottles

which had been placed about Galbraith. Helen took her part in the work, and in this way her physical energies were restored to her. William Johnson had returned. A doctor, the boy said, was on his way and would be there as soon as possible. It had been very difficult to find one who was unengaged. Helen consented to drink another cup of tea and with the aid of its mildly stimulating effect she was able to renew her vigil.

Again Helen stood by the window. The scene of enchantment wrought a short while before by the moon had now utterly vanished—the moon itself had disappeared—and darkness, complete, impenetrable darkness, enveloped the outside world. A few stars still held steadily on their way, otherwise there was no light visible anywhere. There was nothing to look out upon—nothing whatever. She turned away from the window and took her seat by the side of Galbraith. Stooping over him, she placed her hands, as was her habit, upon his fine brow.

"Fair and pure spirit! Fair and pure spirit!"

Something moved her to repeat the words.

"Fair and pure spirit!"

Earnestly she looked at Galbraith, still holding his face in her hands. Oh, that he could open his eyes, only once again, and looking into her face with full consciousness, could read there her entire love for him! Oh, that he might be able to listen, only once again, to her words, as she made to him that full confession which she so longed to make! Her hands clasped themselves more firmly about Galbraith's brow. Her lips touched his.

The solemn stillness of his beautiful features

seemed to bring some kind of peace to her troubled spirit. Her thoughts went back to the events of the morning just passed. She stood again face to face with the vast possibilities of womanhood. She saw again to what heights it may rise—to what perfections it may attain, provided the heart be pure and subject to the law which must be obeyed.

The doctor arrived about midnight. He was an intelligent, sympathetic man, who took in the situation at once. He saw that the only one for whom he could do anything was the young wife, whose marked beauty and grace impressed him reproachfully as he recalled the fact that he had not exercised as much haste in coming to her aid as he might have done. He suggested several things for her bodily comfort, but she would accept none of his suggestions. She wished him to give every moment of his time to Galbraith—she asked only to be permitted to remain where she was until the end came. She watched the doctor closely as he made his examination.

"You can do nothing for him?" she said. The doctor started. He was not accustomed to have his thoughts read so readily by a stranger.

"Well, madam," he replied hesitatingly, "I might bring on a reaction. We try certain treatment in such cases."

"But the result—the final result—that is hopeless—is certain, is it not?" Helen asked passionately.

"Yes, I fear it is." He turned his head away. He could not look into that beautiful, grief-smitten face.

"But consciousness—could he he brought back to that for even a short time?" she pleaded.

"I do not think so." The doctor leaned again over Galbraith, examining his pulse and his heart this time with the greatest care. "I do not think it would be possible. The only kind of reaction which would be possible, and that even is very doubtful, is a purely physical one."

"Then let him alone, I beg of you. Let him die in peace."

"Perhaps," said the doctor, moving toward her and speaking very kindly and gently, "perhaps, madam, you might prefer a consultation—some other physician, one of your own acquaintance—if we have time," he added, not wishing to arouse in Helen any false hopes.

"I will leave that to you, Doctor. Do as you prefer. We have no one—no special physician; but if you have any friend you would like to have——"

He interrupted her:

"If you leave it to me, madam," he said kindly, "I would say no. I fear it could do no good. We will do what we can ourselves." The case, he had perceived from the first, was a perfectly hopeless one; but to satisfy his own conscience and, perchance, to gain a few hours for the suffering wife, the doctor undertook by the use of means which could be quietly applied, to restore Galbraith's circulation. Finding at last that all efforts were futile, he determined to remain with Helen to the end. For a while the two sat together in silence—each watching with closest attention the dying man. Then a few suggestions from the doctor as to her own

physical condition led Helen on to quiet replies; and little by little, speaking as she felt moved to do, she told him something of Galbraith and herself. Nothing in all his professional experience had ever interested and affected the doctor as did the things of which Helen now spoke to him. They gave him a glimpse of a life of which he knew nothing, but of which instinctively he perceived the beauty and the charm, and also the sadness and the tragedy. He was glad to sit in the half lighted room, and listen to Helen talk of Galbraith and of his life. He saw that by doing this he was helping her more than he could do in any other way.

Outside the day was commencing to dawn; the stars were one by one veiling their faces, and a bird here and there twittered in its nest. Galbraith's breathing had become very faint; the beating of his heart was scarcely perceptible. Suddenly Helen became conscious of this. She lost all thought of the doctor's presence as her voice broke the stillness:

"Alex! Alex! do you hear me? It is I—Helen. Look at me—speak to me—one word only! Can you not, my love, can you not? Alex! Tell me in some way, that you understand—that you know—that you forgive me! I have loved you only! Alex! do you not hear me?"

The features of the dying man moved—moved for the first time since he had been stricken. Slowly a subdued form of life seemed to come over them. Once again his features moved—then his eyes opened—the light of the new-born day came through the window and shone full upon his noble face. For a

moment he looked into the eyes of his wife who in response could only cry "Alex!" His countenance relaxed, a smile played about his lips, and in a moment he was gone.

A sob of anguish, then a cry of despair. The doctor sprang to his feet. Helen lay upon the floor. The doctor moved forward to lift her; as he did so his glance fell upon Galbraith, and he was astonished at the radiant expression upon the dead man's face.

Without a divine miracle had been wrought. The glory of the sun spread a mantle of royal splendor over the fields, the meadows, and the woods. The atmosphere was luminous with serenity and a limpid clearness. It was the first day of summer, and the whole earth seemed to have been made anew under the cover of night. Surrounded by the darkness one had felt the world to be sorrowful and worn and dull; but now that a new day had touched it, hope returned to it as the tide returns to the shore, and out of the unseen depths a new life appeared to break.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. ELLIOTT had passed a very taxing day, his hands being full of important work. He had quite forgotten the mission on which he that day sent Helen Galbraith. He recalled it when her letter was handed to him in the afternoon, but his mind was so much engaged at the time, that he laid the letter, aside, and went on with his pursuits. Later in the evening he decided to go out and get supper. As he rose from his desk his eye fell upon Helen's letter, lying still unopened. Taking it up, he noticed beside the superscription the words: "Important—to be read at once." He tore it open, and seeing at a glance that it was personal and lengthy, reseated himself at his desk, and commenced to read. A half-hour, possibly, elapsed before he refolded the letter and replaced it in the envelope. His face had become very grave during the reading, and he sat very still for a while, knitting his brows. Then he rose from his seat and rang a bell, which brought his private secretary.

"Shunk," he said, "I want to see Mr. Westmore. I want to see him to-night. If you go straight to his home you will very probably find him. However, if he is not there, make inquiries—find him, and tell him I *must* see him to-night. I will wait for him here."

Westmore would gladly have delayed this meeting

as long as possible. Yet he did not apprehend any great difficulty; Mr. Elliott could not afford to break with him and create a scandal, having his family and his editorial position to maintain, and no money of any consequence. The first rude shock, when Helen had imparted the condition of things to him, had stunned him terribly—making him fear that his reputation and great power were hopelessly lost. However, he had spent several hours considering the matter, and had decided that through its financial side he would be able to settle the whole thing satisfactorily and finally. Bracing himself, therefore, for the unpleasant interview which he could not avoid, he presented himself in the private office of the editor about eleven o'clock at night.

"He will die game!" Mr. Elliott commented mentally, when he saw Westmore. The two men sat down opposite one another.

"Possibly, you know, Mr. Westmore," said Mr. Elliott after some moments of silence, "that I received this afternoon a letter from Mrs. Galbraith—a letter which was very compromising to yourself." He looked very steadily into the other's face as he spoke, but his gaze was met unflinchingly.

"Not so much so to myself, I should say," he replied, a low laugh of amusement escaping him, "as to the lady in question."

"I beg leave to disagree with you, sir," said Mr. Elliott, struggling perceptibly to hold his temper in hand.

"I suppose you think, Elliott, that a man is to remain immaculate before every kind of temptation."

"That is a view of the case, Mr. Westmore," replied Mr. Elliott in the most positive tones, "which I have not the slightest intention of accepting."

"Well, you are rather positive in your assertions, for an outsider, I should say." Westmore was getting angry himself now, and commenced to walk excitedly up and down the floor. "I should think *I* would know more about that than *you*."

"That will do, Mr. Westmore, that will do!" The editor's hand went down with a mighty thud among his papers as he continued: "I do not believe for a moment that Mrs. Galbraith tempted you. Nothing you can say will make me believe it. Let us understand each other at once!—it is certainly a very simple matter. For some time a fuller and fuller knowledge of your character has been dawning upon me. It came to me very slowly at first; little suggestions from your own lips as to your financial methods brought me my first rays of light on this subject. By degrees others have come to me—always through yourself. Unconsciously you have been preparing me a long while for this last, finishing touch to your character." Mr. Westmore had paused in his walk, and now stood near Mr. Elliott.

"It is pleasant to hear one's self described in such unmistakable terms!" Mr. Westmore spoke in a severely sarcastic tone.

"I am glad that the terms *are* unmistakable," replied Mr. Elliott. "I can see the matter in but one light," he continued, throwing aside the satirical tone in which he had commenced to speak again. "You have had the opportunity to exercise your

power over a beautiful, charming woman who was in trouble—and you have availed yourself of it unscrupulously. That is the way the case appears to me. I do not say that *she* has not erred—for she has. She has erred greatly. I do say, however, that you to whom she appealed should have been her friend, her protector. Because you have failed in this, I say that you are the chief culprit; and all my scorn and my contempt are directed toward you —for her I have only pity." Mr. Elliott had spoken with directness of speech and intensity of passion which could not fail to impress and convince Mr. Westmore. After such a tone and such words as these, there was no mistaking Elliott's estimate of him; nor was that estimate a slight matter to him. He saw that he had not taken the right tack. He decided to see what honesty and self-condemnation would do. After a few moments of thoughtfulness, he said, using as conciliatory a tone as his suppressed anger would permit:

"Well, Elliott, I must confess, I have been a great fool."

"That is neither here nor there, Mr. Westmore. The question is too serious a one to be treated lightly. At least, it is so to me, if not to you," replied Mr. Elliott.

"Well, what do you propose? what is this talk for? I will gladly make Mrs. Galbraith reparation, if that is what you want?" He spoke impatiently, being no longer able to hold his temper in check.

"I am sure," Mr. Elliott uttered his words very slowly, "that Mrs. Galbraith would not accept the kind of reparation which you mean. I do not think

I am mistaken about this. However, the trouble of which we are now speaking *must* lead to one inevitable result—to the ending of our present business associations."

"The devil it must!" exclaimed Mr. Westmore, for the moment letting himself go; then pulling himself up, he added in as amiable a tone as he could command: "Now, Elliott, this is all stuff and nonsense, you know it is. To be candid, you can't get along without me, for you have no money; and I can't well do without you, for I have not the brains and experience this business needs."

"I am sorry that you take that view of the matter," replied the other very quietly. "I have formed my determination, and it is unalterable. This association between us must end."

"Well, then," replied Westmore, thoroughly exasperated and disgusted with the whole affair, "if you prefer to go, you must go, I suppose. I do not doubt that I can find another man as good. Certainly the salary is sufficient."

"I am going to speak to you very plainly, Mr. Westmore," said Mr. Elliott, "and I do not wish to be misunderstood. The association must end, but *you* are the one who must go. You have no right to hold the place you hold. Your character in no way justifies the influence you can exert whenever you wish to do so. This paper is a great paper—its power is unlimited—it should be in the hands of true-hearted men who will exercise their power at all times as it should be exercised. When I came to you I did not know what kind of man you were; but now that I know, I consider myself bound so

far as I can to restrict your power—to force you to retire from the situation. You must accept the terms I have to offer—for *I* intend to remain."

"I do not understand you—what do you mean? —what are you aiming at?" asked Mr. Westmore anxiously, beginning to fear that after all he might be beaten.

"I mean this," replied Mr. Elliott, still speaking quietly. "There was a time when I could not have commanded capital; but to-day that is different—no man in New York can command it more readily than I can, and from a high class of men. I propose to buy this paper, and run it entirely myself. You can put your own price upon it—but all the world knows what its stock is worth."

"But suppose I do not consent to sell," Westmore stood directly before Mr. Elliott—he spoke as quietly as the latter had done,—but it could be seen that he was furiously angry.

"Then your whole character is revealed to the town."

"And you would also expose your dear friend, Mrs. Galbraith?" he asked contemptuously.

"I do not need this last piece of wickedness to undo you; the reputation of Mrs. Galbraith is safe in my hands. That deal of last fall in connection with those western mines—that, you know, would be sufficient." Mr. Elliott spoke very slowly watching the effect of his words. The effect was instantaneous. Westmore started, his face turning very pale.

"When did you learn of that?" he asked unguardedly.

"Only a few days ago a full knowledge of it all came to me, but you gave me a clue to it yourself. Do you remember a conversation we had about that stock—when you wished me to make a certain statement to the public and I would not do it?"

For reply Westmore shuddered and commenced pacing the floor rapidly. After a few moments he brought himself to a halt, and putting his hands behind him, looked at Mr. Elliott steadily. It was as the latter had thought—he was going "to die game."

"Well, Elliott," he said, "you are a far cleverer fellow than I had given you credit for being. I succomb—the old fox is cornered at last; you must have the paper, I suppose." Mr. Elliott knew that it cost him a great effort to say this, and to say it as he did; that this surrender meant for Westmore the giving up of his proudest ambitions.

"I want you to understand," said Sherman Elliott, rising now from the seat he had occupied through this conversation, "I want you to know that it is with no hope of personal benefit I do this. I shall have to borrow the money—an immense sum—and it is very probable that it will remain a heavy load upon my shoulders the rest of my life. If I succeed in working it out, I can never live to enjoy the results of it. I have but one thought in this matter; I am moved by but one purpose. I owe to the public which I serve a great obligation. I am in a position of supreme trust: if I allowed you to continue where you are I should forfeit all right forever to the confidence of honest, good men. It had to come—our separation was in-

evitable. This trouble has only forced the matter—has only made it imperative for me to act at once; and I trust that you will not blame Mrs. Galbraith for what was already forecast to be."

And so the matter was settled and the two men separated; but Mr. Westmore never forgave Helen Galbraith for the part she had played in his removal from the place of power and influence most dear to him.

"Good morning, my dear," said Mr. Elliott, coming into his wife's sitting-room, where, surrounded by her children, she sat enjoying the glorious morning—the first day of summer—which made even Gramercy Park unusually attractive. Mr. Elliott had slept rather later than usual this morning, and so had missed his breakfast with his family. It was evident that his long sleep had done him good, for he seemed especially strong and vigorous, his wife thought, as, looking up, she returned his greeting. "I have a letter here I wish you to read," said he, after having freed himself from the embrace of his children, who always took great liberties with him.

"I will take the children away into my study while you read it; for I think you would better be alone," he added, putting the letter into his wife's hands.

Mrs. Elliott saw that it was a grave matter which her husband wished to impart to her, and she opened the letter somewhat anxiously. She saw at once from whom it had come, and she read it rapidly

through, getting a general knowledge of its contents.

"What was this!" The letter fell from her hands—her eyes wandered out of the window and rested upon the green, fresh park. Presently she caught up the letter again and read it through a second time—read it very slowly—pausing between many of the sentences—trying to fix clearly in her mind the words written there. By the time she had finished this second reading the tears were flowing freely over her cheeks, and, covering her face with her hands, she gave way to the grief which swept over her.

A hand placed quietly upon her head made her conscious of her husband's presence. He sat down and taking her hand in his, he said:

"We must do something to help her."

"Oh, it is the very worst thing I ever knew!" said his wife with a sob.

"Yes, my dear," he replied, "but not so bad that it cannot be repaired in a measure."

"I believe you are the best man in the world, Sherman."

"No, I am not," he replied; "you only think so because I have a way of feeling sorry for people."

"And of always finding a way to help them. But, tell me, can we do anything for her—will she let us?"

"I mean to make the trial," he replied, "and I think she will, when she understands with what kindness of purpose I come to her. But tell me, my dear, what is best to do? What would you advise?"

"I should advise you first to find Mr. Westmore

and thrash him well—thrash him, just as I imagine Alex Galbraith would do if he had his once powerful arms." Serious as the situation was, Mr. Elliott could not refrain from smiling at the pugnacious spirit expressed by his wife; but quickly returning to his former gravity, he said:

"My dear, I have done much better than that," and he told her of his interview with Westmore and of the result. When he had finished he said:

"But about Mrs. Galbraith—I do not wish to delay what we mean to do. Will you go to her, or shall I?" Mrs. Elliott remained thoughtful for a few moments; then she replied:

"I believe, dear, it would be better for you to go. Somehow I feel that she could see you with more ease than she could see me—and then she wrote to you, so it is more natural that you should go."

"I had the same thought myself," he replied.

"I should be so overcome with tears, I fear, that I could do very little for her. But it is not, dear, that I do not wish to go; I have never cared so much for any woman. I have never found any other woman so lovely and so lovable as Helen Galbraith. Deep as my feeling for her has been, this letter deepens it—makes me conscious of depths in her life unrevealed to me; and it also makes me realize how much she needs our love and help."

"I was sure that you would feel in this way about it," said Mr. Elliott, and he leaned forward and kissed his wife.

"And I will go to her later," said she, "after you have seen her, and have straightened out, as only you can, some of the many difficulties which beset

her. You will make her understand why I do not come, will you not, dear ? "

"You may trust me for that," he replied, rising; "and, if I were you I would not go out this morning. You may be needed sooner than you can tell."

"Now you see how sure my instinct was when it prompted me so strongly not to go away yet."

"Yes," said Mr. Elliott, "you are seldom wrong, my dear; and at his best even a wise man is no match for a clever woman."

"How many things become clear," said Mr. Elliott, "as we stand in the presence of a death like this." He and Helen were together beside the body of Galbraith.

"Fair and pure spirit! Fair and pure spirit!" repeated Helen, looking steadfastly upon the face of her dead husband. This was all she could say. She had reached her uttermost limit, and sinking into the nearest chair, she was overpowered by her grief. As the earnest, strong voice of her friend spoke to her of the continued, nay of the increased, love of his wife and himself, tears came in an overwhelming flood, and she wept for the first time since Galbraith died.

When Mr. Elliott came in upon Helen and her grief, she had been inclined to turn away from him, and to hide herself in her humiliation from his sight. In fact, at that moment, there was in her heart the wish that she might never again look upon a human face which she had known in the past. As much as

she longed for this, Helen could not run away from Mr. Elliott, for the unmistakable kindness of his manner and his words forced her to listen to him. She was not brought at once to speak to him freely, nor did he expect her to do so; only gradually, as her mind was acted upon by his, was she able to utter her deepest, most sacred thoughts. Mr. Elliott's nature was strong, and Helen trusted him; therefore, when she yielded herself to his sympathy, she concealed nothing from him—reserved nothing—evaded nothing. His great heart swelled within him at the things which she unfolded concerning her own life and that of Galbraith, of the aspirations which had made both of their young lives so radiant and so filled with hope.

"'Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.' This, it seems to me," he said, "is what you must learn. You started forth in life confident of the promise of eternal youth, of eternal success. But this is never to be in any life. Youth must go—success must give way—we must learn to die to our own ambitions—even to what often seem to be our aspirations. We may try to escape a personal knowledge of the deeper truths, of the more searching and awful lessons of life; but if it be necessary for our development that we learn them, God will surely bring us face to face with them—will instruct us, if even by severe methods, where we need instruction. There is no food which the soul needs but truth, and when once it is fed upon truth, all that is material, all that is physical will fade away, and the spiritual will come into our lives with clear

and compelling distinction. I *know*, Mrs. Galbraith, that these things are true.

"One must often wait long," he continued, "for the hour that he is strong enough to grapple with and master the weakness, or the wilfulness, or the rebelliousness, of his own nature. But when that hour is come, as will surely be the case, if one is not 'disobedient unto the heavenly vision,' there will come a transformation like the descent of the heavens upon the earth, and the whole world will not be fuller of unspeakable splendors than is the human soul that has endured, and pressed forward, and achieved the entire conquest of self."

He saw that Helen followed his words with attention, and that they seemed to bring some kind of help, or light to her.

"Possibly," he went on, feeling that something concerning his own experience might draw her nearer to him, and add impressiveness and value to what he had already said, "possibly, no man comes closer to the heart of a people in modern life than does the editor of a great daily in a city like New York. In such a position a man stands shoulder to shoulder with all the great movements of his time, and with all the men who are behind these movements. If the editor will observe closely he will see that one great law works through every grade and every development of life. For a time, often, men, who are purely self-seeking, who aim to lift *themselves* by means of association with a great cause, seem to succeed, but only for a time. Those that crave great positions, rather than true greatness—those who undertake tremendous labor for the fame at-

tached to it rather than for the sake of adding a finer and more enduring quality to human labor—these become often popular heroes—but also only for a time. I have seen it repeat itself over and over. My own career has taught me that the only men who, at the final count, are the winners in public life, as in private life, are those who learn to seek other things than the gratification of their own ambitions, or their own wills. In saying this, I am not seeking to point you to a state of self-abnegation where life is barren and cold and fruitless. Such, however, would not be the result of the kind of self-surrender of which I am speaking. The life which I have in my thoughts is one filled with labor and righteousness and the pursuit of truth—and you will find in it what you will find in no other life—no matter what has seemed its promise at the start—you will find in it happiness and eternal hope."

When it became necessary for Mr. Elliott to leave, he arranged with Helen to take charge of all the practical matters needing attention at a time like this; planning also that his wife should come to her immediately upon his return to New York. At parting he said:

"I ask you to remember that there is nothing so sacred as friendship—not even love is more sacred than friendship. Love has been taken out of your life, but you have remaining in it the sincerest, the deepest friendship which my wife and myself can render to any one. Let this—" he covered her right hand with both of his own large, strong hands as he spoke—"Let this be your anchor—let this hold you fast. Let it be the power outside of yourself

which will help you to regain the ground you have lost, and to establish yourself anew in a noble, earnest, simple life."

In the days which followed Helen learned to appreciate the sacredness and value of a true friendship like that which Mr. and Mrs. Elliott bestowed upon her. Mrs. Elliott came to the cottage as soon as she learned from her husband what had befallen, and taking entire charge of everything there, made it possible for Helen to give her worn and weary body the rest which it so sorely needed. But it was more especially the love and sympathy bestowed by her which took hold of Helen's lacerated heart, soothed and softened and suffused it, making her willing at last to lie still and be ministered to.

A few days later Helen and the Elliotts took Galbraith's body back to his native town and buried it there among his fathers, in an old garden where once, years before, a small boy lying in the long, lush grass had for the first time realized that the world about him was filled with beauty. Then nature asserted its claim upon Helen. For several weeks she lay prostrated, almost insensible, not caring whether she came back to life and health or not. She cared for nothing except to have Mrs. Elliott sit by her bedside and hold her hand, or read to her. What the book might be did not matter; all she cared for was the low, sweet voice of the reader. As weeks went by, though she in no way sought or desired it, physical strength came back to

her. One afternoon, when she had been able to dress herself in a soft black silk gown, which Mrs. Elliott had prepared for her, Helen sat down at one of the windows in Mrs. Elliott's sitting-room—for the Elliotts had not allowed her to return to the cottage after Galbraith's burial. She looked out upon the aristocratic old square; it was silent and deserted, dry and dusty ; not a suggestion of life or freshness could be discerned in the hot summer air which swept in at the window. Her thoughts commenced to wander away from herself and her surroundings; she thought of green fields, of fresh meadows, with brooks running musically through them at night ; then her thoughts went still further, to mountain slopes and summits ; further still they went,—out to the long-stretching coast and the sea beyond ; and here they rested upon the broad, mighty waters that foam and lash themselves eternally along wild and rocky shores. For the first time in many days she was now conscious of a desire.

"Yes, I want the sea ! that is it !"

It was arranged as Helen wished, and not many days later she and Mrs. Elliott were comfortably established in a quiet cottage on White Island, the most picturesque of the Isles of Shoals. It perfectly suited the taste and present needs of Helen. Under the influences with which this life surrounded her, some of her strength and vitality seemed to return ; her interest in natural things came out more and more from day to day. Finally, when she seemed able to do for herself all the little practical things on which the comfort of semi-invalidism depends,

Mrs. Elliott, seeing that solitude was for the present more acceptable to her than companionship, left Helen and joined her own family at their usual summer resort.

Alone now, except for the eternal sound of the sea, Helen gave herself up to the welcome loneliness and freedom of her life. During these days she seemed to be always awake and always out of doors, and the sunrise became as familiar to her as the sunset. She began to feel that for the first time in her life she was brought face to face with the vast powers of nature, and that she was gaining a new sense of the relations of man to his Creator. Often in the soft, moonlit summer nights, while she was leading this sea-bound, solitary life, she would go alone down to the water's edge and sit there in silent awe and wonder at the majesty of the solemn sea and of the great forces of the universe. At such times as these, the mingled mysteries of human pain and human grief were unfolded to her vision; and then it was she began to feel that the future might yet hold sacred duties for her. The thought of Galbraith was always with her; but principally as he had been in his young manhood, stretching forth his strong, willing hands towards the work which he longed to do. At times the thought of him in that different life—bereft of his arms, succumbing day by day to the miseries and agonies of a slow death—this thought would come; and when it came she felt it was more than she could bear in her solitude. But as the days went by, and the influence of sky and sea wrought upon her, the lesson which all of this was meant to teach commenced

to be learned by her; and the life of which Mr. Elliott had spoken—the life filled with labor and righteousness and the pursuit of truth—this life commenced to seem possible to her.

Day after day she watched the sea; through the long summer mornings and the quiet summer evennings she sat listening to its eternal sound; and the new awakening of her spirit to a conscious sense of its own responsibilities and possibilities grew upon her and took possession of her, working a wonderful development in her character. Now she saw that up to this time, even in those days of fierest battle before Galbraith's death when she sought to surrender entirely her own will, that up to this time, through all the past, her life had been but a struggling, rebellious one. Never had she been willing to sit still and suffer, never submissive to accept what had come to her; but always fighting to alter the condition of things, always striving to find a way of her own. Many days she sat by the sea and thought of these things; while on the smooth, sandy beach at her feet the long waves broke foaming and white, and beyond, on the far sea-line, the shoals loomed distinct and clear.

One afternoon in September she was surprised by Mr. and Mrs. Elliott. They had come unannounced, wishing to find Helen off guard, so that they might determine what was her real condition. They found her thin, and still very sad; but the expression upon her face, as they came unexpectedly upon her, told them what they wished to know, and also what they had hoped might be; that these long, solitary days by the sea had done for her what no human love

could now do: restored to her her lost faith and courage, and renewed within her that life which had well nigh gone out forever. As they all sat together on the beach, watching the great rollers come in, illumined by a brilliant sun, and talking about the events of the past two months, Helen said:

"It would seem to most people that I have little to go back to—but to me it is much. I want to go back now—and I want my work again."

"Yes," said Mr. Elliott, "I knew it would be so—that you would be willing to come back to it—and it is right that it should be so. Human life should move onward and not be entirely and forever overcome by its mistakes and its sorrows."

"I feel now the need of that life of which you spoke to me," said Helen, "that life filled with labor and righteousness and the pursuit of truth. I could give no sign then; but the words have remained with me."

Mr. Elliott's eyes were fixed upon the great white rollers, coming in upon the sandy beach. He mused for a few moments before he replied:

"Yes, and you will find that the rest of what I then said will in time come to pass. When you have once made this life your own, you will find in it happiness and eternal hope."

"I am not thinking of that yet," said Helen. "All I want now is the daily labor, the daily seeking after good for myself and others. If the other things come it must be after long years. My aim now is to redeem the time—to find again the way which I have lost—in fact, so to live that I may prove myself worthy to have been the chosen com-

panion of so large and beneficent a soul as was Alex Galbraith's."

"Then you are ready to go back with us?" asked Mrs. Elliott, gathering Helen's hands in her own as she spoke, and pressing them against her heart.

"Yes, my friend, if you will have me," Helen replied.

"Now and always," said Mrs. Elliott. "We need you—your work needs you—no woman in the world has a place more ready for her than you have."

"You are too good! You are too good!" Helen's tears could no longer be held in check.

"We are not good, dear; we only love you," said Mrs. Elliott, putting her arms about Helen's shoulders and drawing her closely to herself.

The three sat together for some time. The continuous sound of the waters alone broke the stillness of the afternoon. There was a strange charm, and indefinable influence about the scene on which they looked. In the west the veiled sun was fast declining. They lingered over the scene, as one does when the imagination is touched; they watched with deepest interest the effect of sky and water upon the jagged reefs running out in every direction beyond their view. At last the sun fell behind a great billow of clouds piled up in the west, and the ledges of the islands, rising high above the rolling sea, looked sullen and forbidding in the deepening shadows of night. It was a solemn, mystical picture. Helen sat close to Mrs. Elliott, glad to feel herself warmed by the loving arms that had wound themselves about her.

"Then, I have a plan, dear," said Mrs. Elliott. "There are my girls on the East Side. Some one must help me about them."

"And I—am *I* to be that one?" Helen asked eagerly.

"Yes, my dear, if you will."

"Ah, I thank you, that is what I want—it will bring me what I seek."

"Then the future has hope in it already," said Mr. Elliott.

And so it came to pass that to-day there goes in and out among the homes of sin and degradation in New York city a tall, pale woman of wonderful grace and beauty, who, clad in a simple robe of black, is looked upon by many weary, fainting souls as their *Vierge Consolatrice*. The sympathies and merciful kindnesses of this woman know no limitations. Her life is dedicated—the seal of a great cause has been put upon it—and at last she walks steadily onward, her heart purified and subject to the will of God.

THE END.

Martha Humphreys
July 1900